

Tunis refuses landing for Israeli plane

TUNIS (AP) — Tunisia, long expected to be one of the first Arab countries to normalize ties with Israel, denied landing rights to an Israeli plane carrying peace negotiators, Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) officials said Tuesday. The plane carrying Israeli negotiator Uri Savir, Jacques Neria and Uzi Dayan was forced to divert to Rome on Monday. They later joined American envoy Dennis Ross in Rome and flew to Tunis on a U.S. government plane. The negotiators subsequently left Tunisia with Mr. Ross after failing to persuade Yasser Arafat to return to the peace talks in the wake of last month's massacre at a mosque in Hebron. Since the Palestinians signed their self-rule accord with Israel, the Israelis usually have travelled on commercial flights via Europe or Egypt. It was not clear why they tried to fly on an Israeli plane this time, but it may have been intended as a test of Tunisian policy. In 1985, Israeli warplanes bombed the PLO headquarters in Tunis, killing at least 61 Palestinians and 12 Tunisians. Three years later Mr. Arafat's military mastermind and trusted aide, Khalil Al Wazir, was assassinated in his Tunis villa by Israeli commandos.

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Rabin, Arafat to visit Moscow in April

MOSCOW (R) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin have both accepted invitations from President Boris Yeltsin to visit Moscow in April, a senior Russian diplomat said on Tuesday. The visits would not be simultaneous. Viktor Gokhman, deputy head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department, told a news conference. Mr. Gokhman said Mr. Arafat has been invited to come to Moscow on April 19 and Mr. Rabin on April 24-26. "The invitations were accepted with gratitude and we... consider that on these dates we will receive the leaders of the PLO and Israel in Moscow," he said. Mr. Gokhman said that both the PLO and Israel were ready to resume peace talks, stalled after the Hebron mosque massacre, but Mr. Arafat wanted to link the resumption of talks to adoption of a U.N. Security Council resolution denouncing the killings. Mr. Gokhman accompanied Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev on a lightning visit to Tunis and Israel last week.

Gaza Fateh chief visits Knesset

TEL AVIV (R) — The leader of Fateh in the occupied Gaza Strip made an unprecedented visit to Israel's parliament (Knesset) on Tuesday with a message that peace and Jewish settlements were incompatible. Sufian Abu Zaideh said Israel had to understand that the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) suspended peace talks because a settler's slasher of 60 Palestinians in the West Bank on Feb. 25 proved a longstanding fear. "We always thought that peace with settlers and settlements remaining was impossible. The massacre in Hebron proved that point and because of that the negotiations stopped," Mr. Abu Zaideh told reporters at the parliament building. Members of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's Labour Party invited Mr. Abu Zaideh and his delegation to make the visit.

Leopard visits Jeddah

DUBAI (R) — French Defense Minister Francois Leopold paid a lightning visit to Saudi Arabia, which has been critical of Europe's stance on the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia. The Saudi Press Agency (SPA) said on Tuesday Mr. Leopold met King Fahd in Jeddah and Saudi Defence Minister Prince Sultan after visiting Bosnia with French Prime Minister Edouard Balladur. He left the Kingdom late on Monday. Saudi Arabia has repeatedly criticised European reluctance to defend Bosnia's beleaguered Muslims and these concerns were expressed to Mr. Balladur during talks with King Fahd in January.

Sudan rebel leader seeks world help

ROME (R) — A Sudanese rebel leader said on Tuesday that rival guerrillas in Africa's biggest country had resolved their most serious conflicts, and urged world leaders to help them win independence from Khartoum. "We call upon the international community to (make) the government of Sudan commit itself to a peaceful settlement of the conflict instead of waging war," said Rick Machar, leader of one faction of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Army (SPLA). Speaking to reporters, Mr. Machar accused the Khartoum government of mounting a dry season offensive aimed at killing and displacing innocent civilians.

9 Somalis killed

MOGADISHU (R) — Indian peacekeeping troops shot dead nine Somali bandits who attacked a relief convoy on Tuesday in a fresh surge of lawlessness. A Zimbafrican peacekeeper was shot dead outside his camp in the village of Agrogo, near Mogadishu, but the details were not yet known, U.N. officers said. U.N. military spokesman Major Chris Badge told reporters that 14 bandits raked the convoy with gunfire as it headed for the inland town of Baidoa. "The escorting troops returned fire and five (were) wounded who were evacuated to Baidoa by helicopter and nine were killed," Maj. Badge told reporters. The Indians who are based in Baidoa, the town once at the heart of Somalia's famine, were travelling with a 16-vehicle Irish convoy at the time. Peacekeepers confiscated machine guns, rifles and a rocket launcher.

Clinton extends ban on testing

NASHUA (AP) — President Clinton has extended a moratorium on U.S. nuclear weapons testing for a year, through September 1995; the White House announced Tuesday. The announcement came during a visit by the president to New Hampshire. The current nuclear testing moratorium was to expire at the end of this September. Among the factors leading to the extension, said White House Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers, was restraint shown by other nuclear powers "in not responding to China's nuclear test last October."

Palestinian security more important than resumed talks — PLO

Rabin heads for U.S.; Peres says April timetable may not be met; Arabs dismayed over Security Council vote delay

TUNIS (Agencies) — Protection for Palestinians against Jewish settlers in Israeli-occupied territories is more important than any deal for resuming talks with Israel, a Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said on Tuesday.

"No one can threaten us with the time factor, because

implementing the PLO-Israel peace deal signed in Washington last September (see page 2).

The negotiations, intended to lead to Palestinian self-rule in parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, stopped after a Jewish settler massacred about 60 Palestinian worshippers in a Hebron mosque on Feb. 25.

PLO officials said the Arafat-Ross meeting failed to achieve a breakthrough because the U.S. envoy could not give sufficient commitments on security measures for Palestinians in occupied territories.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin left for Washington Tuesday hoping to rescue the peace talks.

Before heading for the United States to meet President Bill Clinton on Wednesday, Mr. Rabin told army radio: "I know the American effort is to bring about a process that will get the talks back on track."

Since the massacre, Israel has cracked down on hardcore militant Jews, "detaining some without trial, disarming and limiting the movements of others and outlawing two anti-Arab groups."

But the PLO said more was needed to ensure the safety of Palestinians.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said the Rabin-Clinton meeting might provide the breakthrough which escaped the Arafat-Ross meeting.

"I see some difficulties and I see an air of crisis, but in my judgement we didn't reach a deadend," Mr. Peres told reporters.

"They want some more measures as a result of the event in

(Continued on page 3)

Israeli interpretation of Oslo deal a key hurdle

By Michael Jansen

ISRAEL'S deliberate misinterpretation of provisions in the Oslo accord has become what an authoritative PLO source said is "one of the issues" preventing the return by the Palestinians to the peace talks.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Monday that there could be no discussion of Israeli settlements in the occupied territories for "two years," in accordance with the Oslo accord. He also said that the PLO's demand for urgent discussion of the settlements, which Palestinians consider a threat to their security, amounted to a "contravention" of the Oslo accord which, according to Israel, specifies that such negotiations are not due to begin before the end of the second year of the interim period. However, it is Israel's own misinterpretation of the accord which calls into question the intention being that such negotiations "will commence as soon as possible."

According to the source, the PLO has, unfortunately, permitted the Israeli misinterpretation of the accord to stand in the public mind by failing to correct Israel and call the world's attention to what the Oslo accord really says.

(Continued on page 3)

U.N. may consider Iraq oil ban soon — Russian diplomat

sovereignty and borders of Kuwait, he said.

Russia, which backed the West in imposing and maintaining the sanctions, has been pursuing a more forceful and independent foreign policy line since communists and nationalists won strong support in December parliamentary elections.

The foreign ministry has said a trial period for Iraq should be no more than six months, after which Russia would be prepared to examine the issue of lifting the oil embargo in accordance with clause 22 of Security Council Resolution 687.

Moscow has told Iraq, which has been campaigning for an end to the embargo, that it must bow fully to Security Council demands.

The report, suggesting Moscow supported some easing of the embargo against its former ally, comes ahead of a U.N. Security Council meeting, scheduled for March 16 or 17, to review sanctions imposed after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The diplomat believed the oil embargo would not be lifted "immediately." Baghdad could be given a trial period pending a final decision, he said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's press service could not immediately comment on the report.

The diplomat said Moscow, once a major supplier of arms and other goods to Iraq, wanted a "positive decision" on the oil embargo, whose lifting would contribute to a resolution of the inviolability of Iraq's border with Kuwait.

Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz left Amman for New York on Tuesday for talks with U.N. officials on monitoring destruction of Baghdad's weapons.

Adel Ibrahim, a spokesman

for the Iraqi embassy in Amman, said Mr. Aziz will head an Iraqi delegation that started talks at the United Nations on Monday.

Gen. Amer Rashid, head of Iraq's Military-Industrial Commission, launched the talks with Rolf Ekeus, a Swedish diplomat. Mr. Ekeus planned to meet with Mr. Aziz, probably on Wednesday.

Diplomats close to the U.N. talks expressed optimism, but acknowledged that differences remain.

Officials of the U.N. weapons monitoring team said Mr. Ekeus planned to meet with Mr. Aziz, probably on Wednesday.

Diplomats said that among the issues needed to be discussed this week include so-called "dual-purpose" sites, which could have a civilian use but could be altered to make weapons materials.

U.N. and Iraqi officials also intend to work up a blueprint on monitoring activities, including plans for photographing various sites.

Mr. Ekeus has said he would need to see six months of full compliance by Iraq with U.N. resolution calling for elimination of weapons of mass destruction. But they say Baghdad has failed to comply with the law, were seen as allies in controlling the occupied territories whereas Arabs were stigmatized as criminals.

Betselem also charged there was confusion in the army about how to handle settlers who got violent, with statements by top generals about enforcing the law not always reflected in the orders that soldiers got in

the field.

The report follows the Jan. 25 massacre in a Hebron mosque, when settler Baruch Goldstein gunned down at least 60 Palestinian worshippers. Goldstein's act did not take place in a vacuum, but was the result of ongoing incitement to harm the Palestinians and what's worse, a chain of violent incidents by settlers against Palestinians with frequent and illegal use of weapons," said Gila Zivirsky, the head of Betselem.

The army said it was studying the report and would respond later. The police issued a statement saying investigators treated Palestinians and Israelis the same, and would respond further when it had a chance to study the report.



(left), the Jordanian official who commands the U.N. force in Croatia, and unidentified others (AFP photo)

Crown Prince visits Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (Agencies) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan was received with all the ceremonies the battered Bosnian capital of Sarajevo could muster Tuesday.

He responded by urging support for international diplomatic efforts to end the city's siege and the country's brutal 23-month ethnic war.

"King Hussein and the Jordanian people extend their deepest sympathies for your suffering and the suffering of the people of Sarajevo," Prince Hassan said in remarks to Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

The Crown Prince was welcomed by Mr. Izetbegovic and a Bosnian army honour guard as he stepped from his armoured car onto a tattered and slightly stained yellow carpet and strode into Bosnia's shrapnel-pocked presidency building.

After their meeting, Mr. Izetbegovic thanked the Prince for Jordan's support during the war, especially for sheltering 400 Bosnian refugees.

The Bosnian president used the occasion to renew his call for the just peace to end the Bosnian conflict. He said such a peace should include the return of occupied territories, the return of refugees to their homes and the punishment of war criminals, "not as revenge, but as an act of justice to pave the way for possible reconciliation."

Crown Prince Hassan had visited Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in Zagreb on Monday, where he also met Yasushi Akashi, the U.N. special envoy to the former Yugoslavia, and the new U.N. peacekeeping commander, General Bertrand de Lapresle.

The Prince used his stop in Sarajevo to visit some of the 3,000 Jordanian troops doing U.N. duty in Croacia and Bosnia.

A number of the Jordanians were recently reassigned to the Bosnian capital to help consolidate a successful five-week old ceasefire between Muslim-led government troops and Serbs besieging the city.

President Izetbegovic paid tribute to Jordan's efforts in the peacekeeping mission and for its hosting 400 Bosnian families and wounded who were treated at Jordanian hospitals.

Later in a statement to the press, the Crown Prince said that more Jordanian troops would be sent to serve with the U.N. force in Bosnia.

Prince Hassan was scheduled to visit a war shelter in the Croatian town of Lipik near the border with Bosnia.

Prince Hassan had donated \$10,000 to the reconstruction of the shelter, which was destroyed by Serbian shells. His donation attracted philanthropist institutions in Canada, the U.S., Switzerland, the United Kingdom, New Zealand,

(Continued on page 3)

Levinger taken to court in Israeli gesture to woo Palestinians to talks

Thousands demonstrate against Rabin

KIRYAT ARBA, Occupied West Bank (AP) — Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the militant founder of the Jewish settlement movement in the occupied territories, was hauled into court Tuesday on charges of ignoring army orders.

Palestinians still simmering about the massacre clashed with troops.

The Israeli army was heavily deployed in the occupied territories, on alert for attacks because Tuesday was the deadline given in a leaflet by a Palestinian group for settlers to abandon about half a dozen Jewish settlements or face

During the rally, demonstrators waved posters claiming the army doesn't have a mandate to make concessions to the Palestinians.

The crowd booted opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu when he called the Hebron massacre a crime and cheered when he told them, "If we don't have the right to live in Hebron we don't have the right to live anywhere in this country."

Demonstrators burned Palestinian flags and Israeli television reported four people carrying posters of the anti-Arab Kach group were arrested.

Clashes erupted in Jerusalem and in the Gaza Strip. On east Jerusalem's main Arab

shopping artery troops fired tear-gas at youths throwing rocks at them.

In Gaza, two armed men bidding in a gas station opened fire on a passing army jeep that was part of stepped up patrols. Soldiers chased them into the town of Beit Lahiya and shot both of them, killing one and seriously wounding another, according to army and Palestinian reports.

Kiryat Arba, a settlement of 8,000, was one of half a dozen threatened in the leaflet published by the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, after the massacre. Resident Baruch Goldstein murdered at least 60 Palestinian worshippers at the Ibrahim Mosque.

Several security roadblocks were added Tuesday along the 45-kilometre road between Jerusalem and Kiryat Arba. Soldiers scanned the settlement constantly with binoculars.

Hebron, has been kept under curfew, its 110,000 Palestinian residents confined indoors for most of the 19 days since the massacre took place.

(Continued on page 3)

Rights group charges settlers above the law

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) — An Israeli human rights group charged Tuesday that the army and police had failed to adequately investigate settler attacks on Palestinians for years, fostering an atmosphere that lead to the Hebron mosque massacre.

The 131-page report by Betselem detailed what researchers called an institutionalised double standard where settlers, even when they broke the law, were seen as allies in controlling the occupied territories whereas Arabs were stigmatized as criminals.

Betselem also charged there was confusion in the army about how to handle settlers who got violent, with statements by top generals about enforcing the law not always reflected in the orders that soldiers got in

Settlers frequently say they feel vulnerable to attacks because the army does not do enough to protect them.

The report said that in a study of the 48 cases from 1988 to 1992 when Palestinians were killed by settlers, only 12 made it to court. It said 27 were dropped, police could not find the files for two and the rest were ongoing.

The report said settlers convicted received lenient sentences, far lighter than the penalties handed down to Palestinians sent through the military court system for similar crimes.

Of eight convicted in Palestinian deaths, sentences ranged from one life sentence to six-months public service. At least 27 cases were dropped and police could not find the files for

for two, it said.

In most cases the settlers fired after being stoned or stabbed by Palestinians, but only four were in life-threatening situations. Eitan Felner, an author of the report, told reporters.

Mr. Felner noted that little has been done to rectify the leniency towards settlers since a report by the attorney general's office complained about the problem in 1984.

Betselem said that the current detention orders against eight extremist settlers and banning two groups, Kach and Kahane LIVES, did not go far enough to stopping the problem. It recommended that the full weight of the law be used against anyone involved in violence in the occupied territories.

U.S. working to bring parties back to Mideast peace process — Gore

WASHINGTON — The United States is actively involved in drafting a United Nations Security Council resolution concerning the Hebron massacre that will help bring the parties to the Middle East peace process back to the negotiating table, Vice President Albert Gore said March 13.

"If this resolution can be developed in the right spirit, it may allow both parties to rejoin each other at the negotiating table and to resume the process, which Hebron threatens to destroy," Gore said in a speech to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's (AIPAC) annual policy conference.

President Clinton "is working hard to achieve a resolution that will condemn the massacre, that will promote the peace process, preserve our policy towards Israel on sensitive issues like Jerusalem, and build a future of hope in the region," Mr. Gore said.

The following is an unofficial transcript of Gore's remarks:

Mr. Gore: I wish I could go on and acknowledge individually the friends who are here who are personally important to me because of the relationships that I have had the privilege and honour of building up over the years. As a matter of fact, I think of all of the individuals in this group to whom I am personally close, I think I've heard from all of you within the last 48 hours, as a matter of fact.

It's been an interesting year. I have to begin by saying that, I have enjoyed and been honoured by the privilege to serve as vice president of the United States. I appreciate those of you who made it possible for me to serve in this capacity and for Bill Clinton to serve as president. We've been trying very hard to do a good job. I have participated actively as we have fought battle after battle this year. I have even had a chance to vote a few times, you may have noticed, in the Congress.

I was explaining to those in the Democratic caucus the other day that the experience of being able to vote this year, this past year, has had a tremendous impact on my whole outlook on life. It's made me a much more optimistic and positive person because I've noticed a pattern. Typically, it has been almost completely ignored by the news media. But if you think about it carefully, as I told my colleagues, every time I vote, we win. It's been a wonderfully lifting experience.

A lot of other things have happened. In the past year, I've had a chance to engage in a debate — I had a chance to be attacked by Louis Farrakhan — and I've had the great privilege of being able to continue my warm relationship with so many of you in talking about the issue of peace in the Middle East and talking about the other struggles that we have and that are important to progress.

I dare say everyone in this room has had two dreams of peace. The first has been to see Israel secure within its borders. That's number one. The second to see Israel at peace and secure among its neighbours.

America has tried to make the first dream a reality by helping Israel meet its requirements for military security and to realise the second through our diplomacy. That is why there has been no moment in my political experience more stirring than the moment when Prime Minister Rabin and

Chairman Arafat stood on the White House lawn last September with President Clinton and shook hands. That was the moment when the two dreams began to come together and merge with reality. It was a stunning demarcation line between war and peace, between despair and hope.

It would be a heartbreaking irony if in Hebron, whose very name derives from the Hebrew word for "friend," such hopes could be dashed by one enemy of peace walking into a mosque carrying grenades and an assault rifle. Is that the end? Have we returned to an unending series of days when bombs blow up school buses and when soldiers have to disperse crowds with tear gas and rubber bullets?

The president has been working hard to prevent the Hebron massacre from ending our dreams. He knows that we cannot lose the momentum that we have developed. He knows we cannot lose the sense of direction that we have had.

We're doing everything we possibly can to ensure that the spirit of September 13 will survive the assault of a man whose target was not just worshippers, but the peace process itself. I'd like to talk to you today briefly about how we're trying to achieve that goal. First of all, at the most fundamental level, there is the fact that U.S.-Israel relations are as good or better than they have ever been. It is remarkable to note that, as I look back over this first year of our administration, there have been precious few areas of disagreement between the United States and Israel.

Instead we have deepened and strengthened our relationship to the point where it is probably the closest that we have with any of our friends and allies anywhere in the world. We want to keep it that way.

Incidentally, I do appreciate the personal ties in this group that I referred to earlier, and I remember very well hosting many of you at my house in Arlington as Tipper and I welcomed the executive committee on a very cold day. It was extremely cold, but I couldn't remember a warmer gathering. We have a different house, but if I am honoured enough to hold another reception for AIPAC, the reception up there at 34th and Massachusetts will be just as warm as it was out in Arlington, Virginia, and I look forward to that.

Go return to my central point, we support Israel because it is our major democracy, ally with strategic and ideological and cultural ties that grow stronger each year. This administration has engaged in a deep and sustained effort to build the peace process and to make sure that it gains momentum. Obviously, it did not start last September, nor is it strictly the result of the work of the Clinton-Gore administration. America is but one of the many parties acting in the Middle East drama.

Baddy handled, on the other hand, this resolution can even deeply signify the division between the parties and create a new and formidable obstacle to negotiations at the worst possible moment.

Obviously, I cannot go into a great many details right now while the process is underway because it is a very fluid situation. But the president is working hard to achieve a resolution that will condemn the massacre, that will promote the peace process, preserve our policy towards Israel on sensitive issues like Jerusalem, and build a future of hope in the region.

The reason I didn't acknowledge Steve Grossman at the beginning of my talk, incidentally, is that he is down at the White House at this moment talking with President Clinton.

I want to say that we are working actively with the Palestinians and the Israelis to ensure that passage of a U.N. resolution is not an isolated event. There must be an immediate return to the negotiations.

(Continued on page 5)

tions so that the Declaration of Principles can be implemented as soon as possible. This is a tight, difficult passage for our diplomacy. We need the support of our friends. And in asking for that support, I want to assure you at this critical moment that the president and I have not forgotten the meaning of Jerusalem.

I want to say that I cannot be sure what will happen in the future, but I am optimistic that the parties will return to the negotiating table. And there is a lot of work to do. We want to match the progress which has been made in Israeli-Palestinian diplomacy with similar progress on negotiations with Syria, Jordan and Lebanon.

With regard to Lebanon, for example, we attach great importance to the existence of a sovereign and independent Lebanon as part of the Middle East. We support full implementation of the Taif Accord and withdrawal of all foreign occupied West Bank.

We welcome President Assad's public affirmation of Syria's "strategic decision for peace and for normal, peaceful relations with Israel." But Syria needs to do more. It must engage the government and people of Israel in the only kind of dialogue that can establish the basis for lasting peace and security, one that involves both the words and deeds of peace.

And there is one deed that would carry special weight. We are determined to see that the single most offensive relic of the past, the Arab boycott, is ended now.

I want to reiterate, as we work to achieve the goal of peace in the Middle East, we are guided by the fundamental principle which forms the basis for the peace process: our absolute commitment to Israel's security and to close U.S.-Israel relations. The president told Prime Minister Rabin in their first meeting, a year ago this month — that first meeting as president that he had with him, that as Israel took risks for peace, the United States would be there to minimize those risks.

Prime Minister Rabin's steps have been bold, and the president has kept his promise. We have moved to enhance Israel's high technology capabilities and qualitative edge by maintaining Israel's \$3-billion annual assistance levels in the face of unprecedented global reductions in our aid budget. We have approved Israeli participation in U.S. commercial space launch ventures, authorised the transfer of advanced computers to Israel, established the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission.

We have also worked to strengthen Israel's defence and deterrence ability by working together on an anti-ballistic missile defence system and by transferring F-16s and by authorising the sale of advanced F-15s. The security of Israel is important to us, and we make no bones about it.

We have also worked on a range of other issues, economic, scientific, and one that is an issue that I've worked personally on for many years, the environment. And I've had many interesting meetings with Foreign Minister Peres, who is dedicated to this particular issue. As I've written, I've always admired the way Israel has worked to reclaim degraded land. It is one of the great environmental success stories of history. And I look

forward to the results.

As President Clinton himself acknowledged last September, when it comes to our specific role, others deserve credit as well, from President Carter for bringing Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin to Camp David, to President Bush for initiating the Madrid process.

From the beginning of his administration, though, President Clinton has been deeply committed to doing whatever is possible to keep the process moving forward towards our goal of comprehensive and



Two Israeli soldiers arrest a Palestinian boy after he threw stones at an Israeli patrol in the occupied Gaza Strip (AFP photo)

Hebron massacre dominates 'Eid Al Fitr celebrations

RIYADH (AP) — Muslim leaders marked the 'Eid Al Fitr holiday with calls for unity and renewed condemnation of the massacre of Palestinian worshippers in the Israeli-occupied West Bank.

Fundamentalists, Iran, which regards itself the defender of Islamic causes, said Islamic unity was the only answer to "the unjust order... of world arrogance." Tehran's usual reference to the United States.

"If the Islamic Nation had been united to a certain extent and had taken a single position against the crime of the Zionist regime (at Hebron), the international bodies certainly would not have ignored Muslim sentiments to this extent," Iran's spiritual leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said.

About worshippers were mowed down by a Jewish extremist at the Hebron Mosque on Feb. 25.

Eid Al Fitr marks the end of the month of Ramadan, during which Muslim observe a dawn-to-dusk fast, refraining from eating, drinking smoking and sex.

The three-day holiday normally is marked by the exchange of gifts among relatives and lavish banquets. But this year, the mosque massacre cast a gloomy atmosphere in many countries.

In a separate Eid message, the king's brother, Crown Prince Abdullah, appealed for inter-Arab reconciliation.

"Today more than ever, it is demanded of us that we shed the differences and the attitudes that ripped the (Arab) Nation apart, and pursue cooperation and frankness," he said.

The Arabs world has been split since Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990.

Saudi Arabia has gradually

Arafat meets Ross

WASHINGTON (Agencies)

— U.S. Special Middle East coordinator Ambassador Dennis Ross met Monday to Tunis with Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasser Arafat as part of the U.S. effort to reconvene the talks between the PLO and Israel on implementation of their agreement to the declaration of principles, State Department Deputy Spokeswoman Christine Shelly said.

"The purpose of this brief trip... is to continue those discussions which are still aimed at getting the negotiations back on track," Ms. Shelly emphasized.

She noted that Secretary of State Warren Christopher, while on his Asian trip last weekend, talked by phone with officials in the Mideast, including Mr. Arafat, and subsequently asked Mr. Ross to meet with Mr. Arafat.

She also noted that the United States in recent weeks has made it very clear that "we would like Arafat to agree to resume the discussions as soon as possible."

On another topic, she said the Israeli cabinet decision to ban two Jewish extremist groups, "should be seen in the context of the overall efforts by the Israeli government to address the security concerns of the Palestinians."

"It is our view that by their words and actions, members of the Kach party and Kahane Chai (the banned groups) have advocated and engaged in terrorism and violence," the deputy spokesman said.

She added that the United States is considering what actions it might take concerning these groups.

"The United States condemns acts of terrorism and those who commit or condone them," she emphasized. "We specifically condemned the abhorrent act of terrorism that was committed in Hebron on February 25, when an Israeli settler gunned down 29 Muslims in prayer."

The Israeli government outlawed on Sunday two radical Jewish groups rooted in the Aramaic-hating doctrine of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, branding them terrorist organisations on a par with Islamic militants like Hamas.

It was a Kahane disciple, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, who massacred Muslims at prayer in a Hebron mosque on Feb. 25.

Relying on antiterrorist laws that for decades had been used only against Arabs and not Jews, the government made it illegal to belong to Kach or Kahane Chai, the groups spawned by Kahane, or to any organisation with similar goals. Any group whose objectives include "the establishment of a theocracy in the biblical Land of Israel and the violent expulsion of Arabs from that land" was specifically labelled "terrorist."

Leaders of Kach and Kahane Chai describe themselves as ideological heirs of the militant rabbi, Meir Kahane, who was assassinated in New York in 1990.

Kahane, who founded the Jewish Defence League in New York, established Kach, which means "thus" or "this is the way," after he immigrated to Israel in 1971.

Advocating the expulsion of Arabs from Israel and its occupied territories, and railing against what he called "gentile, Hellenised foreign culture," Kahane made his first foray into Israeli politics in 1977, when he ran unsuccessfully for Parliament.

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 a.m. every Monday

Arr. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday

Dep. Damascus 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

Arr. Amman 5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple 550/650

Banana 680

Banana (Mukammal) 620

Cairo (MS) 70/40

Abu Dhabi, Doha (GF) 70/40

Paris, Damascus (PI) 70/40

Beirut (ME) 70/40

Shallot 1100/900

Grape Fruit 220/300

Green beans 850/950

Lemon 180/200

Marrow (large) 150/100

Marrow (small) 320/220

Olives (green) 700/500

Orange (dry) 540/400

Onion (green) 350/300

Pear (A2) 580/700

Pear (GF) 680/750

Pepper (hot) 480/550

Pepper (sweet) 460/500

Potato 290/190

Radicchio 140/80

Tomato 270/180

String beans 170/100

String beans 1200/900

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire 651222

Blood Bank 651211

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 996390

Public Security Department 630231

Hotel Complaints 605800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Complaints 897467

Al Asmaa pharmacy 637055

Nairouk pharmacy 626262

Al Salam pharmacy 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 636745

Sinclair's pharmacy 637160

Naj



HEARTFELT HUGS FOR A HAPPY 'EID: On the occasion of 'Eid Al Fitr, His Majesty King Hussein and Her Majesty Queen



Noor visit the SOS Children's Village where they distributed gifts to the children there. But at Tareq district near Amman in 1986, the SOS

village provides home-like care to orphaned children and vocational training and education in nearby districts (Photos by George Crystal)

'Eid celebration ends

AMMAN (J.T.) — Government institutions and public organisations today return to business following a five-day break in celebration of 'Eid Al Fitr, marking the end of the Holy Month of Ramadan.

On Sunday, the day of the feast, worshippers attended prayers at the Kingdom's mosques. Prayers at Al Hasbeneh Mosque were attended by His Majesty King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, other Royal family members, ministers, several other Jordanian officials along with a large congregation.

After the prayers, King Hussein and Prince Hassan

visited the tombs of King Abdullah, founder of the Kingdom, and King Talal, where they recited verses of the Koran. The King also visited the tomb of the late Queen Abla.

At a ceremony held later at Raghadan Palace, King Hussein received well-wishers including Cabinet members, speakers and members of Parliament, the chief justice, directors of security services, representatives of religious denominations, heads of tribes, directors of departments, ambassadors, presidents of universities and other dignitaries.

Amman observes Arab City Day

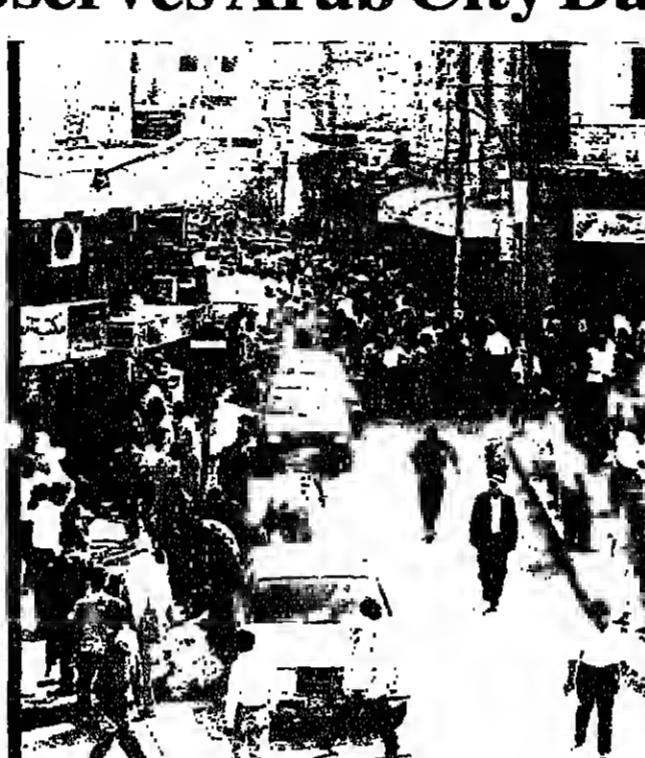
AMMAN (Petra) — The Greater Amman Municipality Tuesday observed Arab City Day as declared by the Arab Cities Organisation by executing an intensive clean-up programme in various districts of the capital, according to Amman Mayor Mamoudah Al Abbadi.

Dr. Abbadi said the municipality's 1994 fiscal budget is JD 70,263 million of which 66.5 per cent is allocated for services, and the balance is to be used for construction and appropriation of land in the implementation of its projects.

He said the municipality has started an intensive cleanliness campaign covering various areas of the capital, with posters at road sides calling on citizens to exercise their duty in safeguarding the environment in and around the city.

Dr. Abbadi said that this year Arab City Day is being observed under the slogan: "The City of the Future Will Cater to Integrated Services for its Inhabitants."

He added that the municipality is proud of its achievements so far in Amman, which he said serves as a model of a



A crowded street in the heart of Amman's commercial centre (File photo)

small but modern and clean circumstances it has faced in city despite the difficult circumstances in the past five decades.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

* Book exhibition at the Safeway International. * Permanent exhibition of S4 Arab contemporary artists at Darat Al Funun of the Abdul Hameed Shouman Foundation in Jabal Luweibdeh (Tel. 643251/2).

* Art exhibition by several Iraqi and Jordanian artists at Orfali Art Gallery (Tel. 826932).

LECTURE

* Lecture entitled "The Physiology of Woman's Hormone Changes Throughout Her Life And Means Of Dealing With Them" by Dr. Sa'id Hijazi at the Royal Cultural Centre at 4:30 p.m.

POETRY AND MUSICAL RECITAL

* Poetry recital by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah accompanied by musical performance by artists Iman and Nasser Abido at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

Palestinian security more important than resumed talks — PLO

(Continued from page 1)
Hebron," he said. "We don't rule out the need to take steps."

He declined to elaborate but said international action demanded by the PLO would not solve the problem.

"Had there been a multinational force in Hebron, there's a doubt whether it could have prevented the tragedy," Mr. Peres said. "We've seen the decisions of the (U.N.) Security Council don't change a situation — not in Bosnia, not in Angola, not in Somalia and not here."

Mr. Peres said that persistent delays in negotiations with the PLO were distancing chances of meeting a mid-April deadline for starting Palestinian autonomy.

Mr. Peres said chances of meeting the timetable were "dwindling" as negotiations continued to be delayed.

"I would regret very much if the Palestinians continue to delay the start of negotiations," Mr. Peres said. "But how does the saying go? How can I say bow long it takes to walk to town if I don't know when you are leaving and at what pace you are walking."

Mr. Ross said before leaving Tunis only that Monday's talks "touched on a number of issues including Palestinian concerns about the security of the Palestinians in the (occupied) territories."

The PLO news agency, WAFA, said Mr. Arafat renewed his demand for "international protection for the Palestinian people against massacres committed by the Israeli army and armed settlers" before the talks could resume.

Arafat adviser Ahmad Tibi, an Israeli Arab, accused Mr. Ross of showing bias in Tunis. "We expected Dennis Ross would come up with the proposals of an honest broker and not adopt almost all that one side is proposing," Mr. Tibi said.

Israel has rejected posting armed foreign forces in the occupied territories and says that settlements' future would only be negotiated within three years of implementing autonomy.

Israel Radio said foreign ministry director-general Uri Savir proposed to the Palestinians that they could put any issue they want on the agenda, including settlements, once the Council resolution.

Mr. Tibi suggested that the Palestinians needed something more substantial in band before they could resume talks. He repeated the Palestinian position that the settlements causing the most friction, especially the 450 Jews living among Hebron's 110,000 Arabs, be dismantled immediately.

Mr. Abed-Rabbo said the Palestinians demanded that the United States and Russia, as co-sponsors of the Middle East peace conference, guarantee protection measures adopted at the United Nations.

"We consider that a U.N. Security Council resolution, if adopted, has no practical value if it is not linked to a U.S. and Russian commitment to guarantee, directly, the international protection in the occupied territories," he said.

The council on Monday cancelled consultations that were expected to be followed by a vote condemning the Hebron massacre and calling for an international presence in occupied territories to protect Palestinians.

PLO officials say the cancellation was demanded by the United States.

"The results of (the Arafat-Ross meeting) do not invite optimism. There is an American attempt to use the U.S. Security Council resolution as a card to bargain in order to resume negotiations," Mr. Abed-Rabbo said.

Tunis-based diplomats said Norway's Terje Roed Larsen, who helped broker last

Levinger taken to court in gesture

(Continued from page 1)

September's peace accord, had intensified mediation efforts with the PLO and the U.S. envoy over the past two days based on a five-point compromise.

But they said the compromise was not accepted because of differences between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Ross on guarantees for implementing a Security Council resolution.

Palestinian and diplomatic sources said Mr. Arafat had demanded a U.S. commitment that the U.N. resolution be implemented, and Mr. Ross's response was not clear enough to satisfy the Palestinian leadership.

For his part Mr. Ross demanded from Mr. Arafat a clear commitment to resume talks with Israel on Wednesday, just after the United States voted for the U.N. resolution.

Mr. Abed-Rabbo said the Palestinians demanded that the United States and Russia, as co-sponsors of the Middle East peace conference, guarantee protection measures adopted at the United Nations.

Mr. Arafat told Mr. Ross that while the U.N. resolution was important, still more crucial were the international presence in occupied territories, the dismantling of Jewish settlements in Hebron, and limiting the carrying of arms by settlers, Mr. Arafat's adviser Marwan Karanfani said.

Arabs expressed dismay Tuesday after the Security Council again postponed debate on the draft resolution that would condemn the Hebron massacre.

The Crown Prince is accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Hassan.

In a statement following his meeting Monday with President Tudjman, the Crown Prince expressed happiness over the progress in the peace talks held in Vienna over the future of the former Yugoslavia describing it as a first step that might open a new chapter of cooperation between the Croats and Muslims of Bosnia.

No immediate explanation has been given for delaying Monday's session. In the past, the United States repeatedly has sought delays as it strives for wording it would find

acceptable.

Libya, often accused by Washington of sponsoring "international terrorism," said that the American policy in the Security Council amounted to "terrorism."

"What do we consider America's arming of doctors, supplying them with machine guns and driving them to commit massacres against Palestinians?" the state-run JANA news agency said in an English-language commentary. "Isn't this real terrorism?"

Newspapers in Egypt have been dismayed at the lack of progress in framing a resolution.

The state-owned, English-language Egyptian gazette last week accused the United States of "arm twisting" at the United Nations.

Crown Prince visits Sarajevo (Continued from page 1)

Scotland, Germany and Italy to provide \$2.7 million for the cause.

The shelter, which was severely damaged in August 1991, was reopened only a few days before the Prince's visit and is currently housing orphaned children aged between three and 16 years.

The Crown Prince is accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Talal Hassan.

"In every democratic state, people demonstrate... perhaps, some of my demonstrations were also a little bit against the law," said Mr. Levinger, sporting a long gray beard and black skullcap.

Mr. Levinger argued that Israeli troops in Hebron are not enough protection and that the peace agreement also undermined their safety by signalling that settlements may be dismantled.

Some cabinet ministers have called for dismantling the Hebron settlement since the massacre.

Construction works drop by 40% in '93 — report

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Construction activity in Jordan declined by nearly 40 per cent during 1993 after hitting record highs in 1991 and 1992, according to recently released official figures.

The government issued 16,469 permits for 4,205 million square metres of building during 1993, compared with 21,191 permits for 6,45 million square metres in 1992 and 17,249 permits for 4,37 million square metres during 1991.

The figures were given in the December 1993 bulletin of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and taken from the Jordan Engineers Association (JEA).

In 1989, the total number of permits was 9,581 for 2,45 million square metres. The huge jump in the figures was a reflection of the increased demand for housing in the country following the return of more than 300,000 expatriates and families in the wake of the Gulf crisis triggered by the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

The drop in construction activity in 1993, as reflected in the number of permits issued during the year, was seen as a sign that demand for housing by the returns had tapered off.

A government study conducted in 1991 estimated that Jordan needed 55,000 new housing units to meet the demands of the returnees added with the normal growth in demand.

No detail was available to establish what part of these estimated needs had been met.

The boom in construction

— which is linked to increased activity in building materials production and in other related sectors of the economy — was seen to have a major factor in the 11 per cent growth that Jordan's gross domestic product (GDP) witnessed in 1991.

The subsequent decline in the sector was reflected in the GDP growth, which was registered at around six per cent in 1992. The same growth is estimated for 1993 as well as 1994.

The 1993 figures for the construction sector showed that:

— 14,285 permits were issued accounting for 3,07 million square metres for solely residential purposes, while 2,184 permits were issued for 1,13 million square metres of multipurpose construction.

— Of the total, Amman accounted for 6,390 permits for 2,05 million square metres of area for residential purposes and 1,282 permits for 864,800 square metres for multipurpose construction.

The comparative 1992 figures issued 12,180 permits for 20,500 square metres of residential area and 261 permits for 9,600 square metres of multipurpose construction.

Real estate agents and engineers said a good part of the permits issued for Amman went for expansion of already built buildings.

A law passed in late 1992 authorised the construction of a fourth floor for already existing buildings subject to a set of parameters related to the age of the building and strength.

The decision was taken partly in view of an increasing number of applicants for new housing, particularly in the Amman area, where land

available for construction is running scarce.

Another factor that prompted the government to allow such construction was so considerations that extended families were growing and a majority of such families did not have enough resources to buy new land for construction.

"It helps a father who owns a two or three-storey building to build an extra floor for his married sons to stay rather than letting them enter the already inflated market for rented houses," commented an official in support of the move.

— Irbid ranked second to Amman, accounting for 4,245 permits for 486,600 square metres of residential area and 443 permits covering 98,100 square metres of multipurpose area. (Comparable 1992 figures: 2,278 permits for 717,900 square metres and three permits and 500 square metres respectively).

— In Zarqa, the authorities issued 865 permits for 205,000 square metres of residential area and 261 permits for 9,600 square metres of multipurpose construction.

Real estate agents and engineers said a good part of the permits issued for Amman went for expansion of already built buildings.

— The rest of the country accounted for 2,285 permits for 339,100 square metres of residential area and 198 permits for 71,500 square metres of multipurpose construction.

(Comparable 1992 figures: 2,366 permits for 355,400 square metres and one permit for 500 square metres respectively.)

Amman-Dead Sea highway becomes fully operational

AMMAN (AP) — A major four-lane highway between Amman and the Dead Sea has become fully operational ahead of a linkage with an abandoned bridge across the Jordan River to areas expected to come under Palestinian autonomy, officials said Tuesday.

They said the remaining five-kilometre stretch of the highway, nicknamed "Peace Road" by diplomats, was opened this week after repairs. The stretch was closed down more than a year ago because of dangerous mudslides.

The repair involved shoring up the steep hillside with reinforced concrete.

The 30-kilometre highway was built at a cost of \$37 million, partly funded by the U.S. government. It branches off from the main southern Amman-Aqaba Highway and runs down to the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth.

A branch road leads to the King Hussein Bridge, which serves as the only passenger

bridge with the main Jericho-Bethlehem highway.

According to Western diplomats, the Amman-Jericho Road will do away with the need for Palestinians to pass through any other part of the West Bank and serves the Israeli purpose of separating the autonomous area from other territories.

Under the September agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), Israel will grant autonomy to the Gaza Strip and Jericho in the first phase and allow the arrangement to take hold in all other parts of the West Bank.

Israel was expected to begin the first phase on Dec. 13, but disputes with the PLO over some of the provisions of the accord held up the move.

Further negotiations produced compromises, but the PLO suspended all talks following the Feb. 25 massacre of Muslim worshippers at a Jewish settler at a West Bank mosque.

Levinger taken to court in gesture

(Continued from page 1)

Levinger ignored army orders to leave an area of Hebron that had been declared a closed military area. Judge Zvi Zilberman set an April 12 trial date.

"Our feeling is that a campaign of persecution has begun against anyone identified as an opponent of the peace process," Mr. Levinger's Attorney, Naftali Werzberger, told the Associated Press.

Mr. Levinger acknowledged that sometimes he violated the law in confrontations with soldiers or Palestinians.

"In every democratic state, people demonstrate... perhaps, some of my demonstrations were also a little bit against the law," said Mr. Levinger, sporting a long gray beard and black skullcap.

Mr. Levinger argued that Israeli troops in Hebron are not enough protection and that the peace agreement also undermined their safety by signalling that settlements may be dismantled.

Some cabinet ministers have called for dismantling the Hebron settlement since the massacre.

The Crown Prince is accompanied by His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah Ben

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Russians to fill the gap

MOSCOW'S RECENT proposal to convene another Madrid conference on the Arab-Israeli conflict may be intended more at reasserting Russia's role in international politics than presenting a practical solution to the logjam in peace negotiations. There had to be a point at which Moscow decided to shed its low international profile, which came as a result of the dissolution of the former Soviet Union and the lost economic, political and military prestige that ensued. That point was first reached during NATO's ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs, and now it seems to be the turn of the Middle East.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin has been under increasing local pressure not to continue to play second fiddle to the U.S. on regional hot spots, especially in the Balkans and the Middle East. Encouraged by its success in persuading the Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons from the Bosnian capital more than three weeks ago, the Russian leadership must have found in the stalled Arab-Israeli peace talks another opportunity to make a reappearance as a global power.

The Israeli-American flat rejection of the Russian proposal to convene another Madrid conference makes the idea a non-starter for all intents and purposes. Only the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) has publicly endorsed the idea and even then the Palestinian welcome was not exactly very warm. This means that the parties to the peace negotiations are back to where they had left off two weeks ago, with the continuation of the suspended bilateral talks being the only viable alternative left for them to pursue.

But the new start-up requires from Washington to act more even-handedly than it did in the aftermath of the Al Ibrahim mosque massacre on Feb. 22. The fact that the U.N. Security Council has been unable to adopt an effective resolution on that pogrom, nearly three weeks after it happened, mainly due to the U.S. position, has provided a fertile climate for the Russians to move in.

The spectre of a renewed big power rivalry does not bode well for the prospects of peace in this region. During the four decades of the cold war, Arab and Jewish maximalists could always depend on the continued support of their mentors in Washington and Moscow in their rejection of peace. Indeed, the Arab rejectionists, a few by the standards of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, are reminding their fellow peace activists that the fall of the Soviet Union and the supremacy of the U.S. are strengthening the position of Israel and weakening that of the Arabs. There is of course much truth in this, considering the U.S.' traditional partiality in favour of Israel.

This is not to say that constructive Russian efforts, and new ideas, are not welcome to move the peace process forward. But unless the U.S., the main co-sponsor of the Middle East peace talks, turns itself into the honest broker it claims to be, the process might witness bigger setbacks from now on.

That is why the U.S. should act to facilitate passage of the Security Council resolution on the Hebron massacre right away. Otherwise, Washington would only help the cause of rejectionists on both sides: Arabs and Jews.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THERE IS A conflict between Moscow's call for holding a new Madrid conference in order to re-examine the Middle East peace process and Washington's desire to see the Palestinians and the Israelis resuming their talks as soon as possible, said Mahmud Rimawi, a columnist in Al Ra'i daily. The Arabs, who suspended their talks with Israel in the light of its procrastinations and obstinacy, fear that Moscow would retreat and withdraw its proposal under U.S.-Israeli pressure, said the writer. Dismayed at the non-achievement of a settlement in the past two years of negotiations, Moscow has suggested that the whole process be re-examined and fresh efforts be made to reach a settlement, said the writer. But he said that neither the Israelis nor the Americans wish to see a second Madrid parley for the simple reason that Israel benefits from the current state of affairs, and also because a Madrid conference means once again referring the Middle East conflict to the international community rather than keeping it under the mercy of the United States.

A COLUMNIST in Al Dustour drew a contrast between Israel and South Africa, saying that in both states racial discrimination is being practiced by the ruling regime. Taher Adwan said that while the whites in South Africa oppress the blacks, the Israelis are practicing genocide against Palestinians. It is regrettable that under the so-called new world order, the world community is condoning the Zionist barbaric acts against defenceless Palestinians, he said. Referring to the investigation being held in Israel in the aftermath of the massacre at the Hebron Mosque, the writer said one of the officers admitted that his troops had no permission to open fire on Jewish settlers even if they were caught committing murder. The world community has lost all credibility, he said.

By G.H. Jansen

"WAR BEGINS in the mind of man" the Charter of UNESCO begins rather grandly, as indeed does everything involving man, including the idea of God. That truism cannot but lead to speculation as to what could possibly be going on in the mind of one Baruch Goldstein as, on Friday Feb. 25 be gunned down in the back worshippers praying in the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron.

His mind-set has a horrible fascination as does that of many other Israelis, including adolescents who say, publicly, that Goldstein was "a great man", a "hero", who "should have killed more Arabs" and who now make pilgrimage to his grave, where they kiss his tombstone.

The mind-set that motivated this mass-murderer is, of course, what is known as "Zionism": the claim that a tract of land along the western coast of West Asia, better known as "Palestine", belongs to the "Jewish people".

because it was "promised" to them by their tribal god Yahweh thousands of years ago.

Strangely enough, the Jews do not seem to realise that this particular myth of theirs demeans and degrades the "Lord of the Worlds", the creator of an immense cosmos, to the position of a real estate agent, parcelling out the surface of the earth and giving bits of it to this person and to that.

This very strange belief has been recently objectified by a newly-formed political movement in Israel named "This Land is Ours", the "Ours" being the Israeli Jews. The improbability of the claim is made still more improbable when those four words are pronounced with a strong American accent by a settler, an immigrant from the United States, whose remotest ancestors could not have had any connection with the "Land" for the last few thousand years if ever. And yet belief in the validity, the sanctity even, of that very strange claim is strong

enough to make intelligent and educated people like Goldstein ready to kill and be killed. Because it is part of their religion — of Judaism.

To be a believing Jew is to be a Zionist. Needless to say this does not necessarily mean that all Jews are Zionists. There are many believing Jews who are non-Zionist and others who are even anti-Zionist, such as those who may be found in "Reform Judaism" or "Conservative Judaism" or in the "Naturei Karta" movement. But certainly most Jews have an in-built tilt towards Zionism. And certainly Zionism is impossible without an acceptance of the prophecy that the dispersed "Chosen People" will return to the "Promised Land", as stated in the history of the Jewish tribes recounted in the books of what the Christians call "The Old Testament."

Such unrealistic views as those of "This Land is Ours" can survive only if they do not come into contact with very different realities in the outside world. And that

means that the persons holding these ideas live in self-enclosed isolation which would be the case, for example, in Jewish ghettos, or in cities on the sub-Continent in communal mohallas or quarters. The Jews, as a people who are in a minority everywhere, except in Israel, are particularly apt to cluster together by choice or for safety, as for instance in Brooklyn which is where Baruch Goldstein came from. When he moved from the mohalla of Brooklyn he went to Israel, which is one great big Jewish ghetto and then chose to live in a sub-ghetto which was the settlement of Kiryat Arba, where certain Jews got together because they shared the same ideas and beliefs — ideas which therefore never came under any testing challenge and could therefore be given universal validity. This is the exact opposite of the open, pluralistic society which has to be open because it is pluralistic, with an interplay of beliefs and ideas.

The "progression" of Jew-

ish messianic ideas may be seen as follows with the ideas and conditions producing and leading into the succeeding stages: Judaism — Zionism — the Jewish State of Israel — exclusive Orthodox and Ultra-Orthodox neighbourhoods in Israeli towns — the mohalla mentality — settlements peopled by Jews belonging to a particular politico-religious movement, like the Kach movement in Kiryat Arba — Goldstein and his admirers — the Hebron Mosque massacre.

For had not one of their number, in defence of Jewish possession of the "Promised Land", "heroically" even broken God's commandment: "Thou Shall Not Kill". By what right, people like the settlers ask, does an earthly state, even a Jewish one, give orders to people who are trying to carry out the "Divine Purpose" that "The Chosen People" should live in the "Promised Land"?

Israel will have a very hard struggle before it, if and when, decides to make the settlers — hitherto outrageously indulged — behave like all the other citizens in a modern state.

The writer is a Cyprus-based journalist specialising in Islamic and Middle Eastern affairs.

By Deborah Seward
The Associated Press

M. KAHIL

MOSCOW — Bruised by several years of humiliation, Russia has ended a string of foreign policy defeats and is challenging the West with an assertive new diplomacy and a readiness to fight for great power status.

Diplomatic successes in the Bosnian war, Russia's desire to reclaim a role in Mideast peacemaking and a tough response to the spy scandal in the United States have given Russia a new voice and weight in world affairs.

"They are getting their act together. There's been a great deal of difference among various foreign policy institutions in the last two years and they are starting to coalesce," said Margot Light, an expert on Russian foreign policy at the London School of Economics.

When Russia inherited the Soviet diplomatic mantle in 1991, the Kremlin's superpower legacy was in shambles after the loss of Eastern Europe and the end of cold war competition in Africa, the Middle East and Central America.

All that was left were the nuclear weapons, an impoverished army and a battered economy. To the dismay of the proud men in the Kremlin, western aid dominated nearly every key summit Boris Yeltsin has attended.

In a 1992 analysis, Russia's influential Council for Foreign and Defence Policy concluded: "Russia is facing the urgent problem of loss of political prestige, trust and dignity as a state."

Russia retreated into isolation as NATO extended its influence into Eastern Europe and the Baltics and threatened to set Russia's diplomatic agenda. Their action consisted primarily of reacting to the West.

Russia began to reconsider its policy late last year, with the military exercising greater power, reformers in retreat and nationalists on the offensive.

The turnaround finally came several weeks ago, when Russia, angered by NATO's

failure to consult with it before threatening to bomb the Bosnian Serbs and worried about its isolation, stepped in to help mediate the conflict.

Russia persuaded the Serbs, its traditional allies, to remove their heavy artillery from around Sarajevo in exchange for sending Russian peacekeepers to the region.

The Russian initiative won international praise, and the sight of Russian peacekeepers being cheered as they entered Sarajevo raised the nation's spirits. It also helped silence Mr. Yeltsin's nationalist enemies.

"It was necessary to urgently show the world the insidiousness of the Russians and here

they remembered about Ames," Lakin, now chairman of the Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, told a recent issue of Literaturnaya Gazeta.

Russian politicians and even former spies have expressed hope the spy scandal will not derail the budding U.S.-Russian partnership, but have also chastised Washington for its use of cold war diplomatic tools.

"Russia's role in the Bosnian crisis was truly important. Our country's authority was strengthened and somebody in the United States really didn't like that," said Vladimir Lukin, the former Russian ambassador to Washington.

"It was necessary to urgently show the world the insidiousness of the Russians and here

Learning to live with a less centralised China

By Gerald Segal

LONDON — China's central government is fading in importance. The crisis of governance has major implications for the way in which the outside world deals with China.

Market reforms that decentralise power have unglued important parts of the social fabric. At a time of uncertainty over the succession to Deng Xiaoping, the authority of government is seriously undermined.

Beijing no longer has control over the economy. Attempts to impose an austerity plan in mid-1993 were soon abandoned. Efforts later in the year to impose a new tax structure so that the central government would stop losing so much revenue to the regions is being frustrated at lower levels.

Provinces are acting, as the World Bank has noted, like increasingly independent agents. The percentage of trade done between provinces is falling as they expand contacts with the outside world. The official media worry openly about protectionism and trade wars between provinces.

The loosening of central au-

thority has caused a sharp rise in the drug and gun trade and in associated rates of crime and drug addiction. China has a floating population of 1.30 million, and another 200 million people are surplus to the requirements of the rural economy. Mass migration on this scale would be the largest such flow in human history.

This is looming at a time when senior Chinese military leaders are warning that social decay is eating away at the morale and professionalism of the armed forces.

External trade is increasingly a matter that need not involve contact with the central government. Beijing cannot afford to impose controls on trade with Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The weakness of the central government accounts for growing problems along the southwestern frontier where the trade in guns, drugs and even women sold into prostitution in Southeast Asia is out of control. The rise of lawlessness is

also evident in the increase in piracy off China's coast. Some of these naval entrepreneurs turn their boats into transports for the illegal migration of more than 100,000 Chinese a year. At least 20,000 of them end up in the United States, with double that number entering Europe. Beijing cannot control the flow.

The weakness of central government extends to relations with Hong Kong and Taiwan. One of the reasons why Beijing is able to take such a tough line on Hong Kong is that Beijing has lost important aspects of control of Guangdong Province, adjacent to Hong Kong, which relies heavily on investment from the British colony and wants to get on with business.

Taiwan is finding that increasing economic convergence with southern China means that Beijing has less power over both Taiwan and southern China. A struggle that was once between China and Taiwan is now much more complex.

In short, China is changing shape. It is thus becoming all the more important to deal with the parts where real deci-

sions are made. On many issues, that means dealing with provinces and with lower levels of government.

Many foreign governments would welcome a more decentralised China because that would weaken Beijing's ability to pursue a nationalist agenda in its numerous territorial disputes with other Asian states, and on other issues. Yet on some issues, such as enforcing global agreements under GATT, outsiders have an interest in a centralised China.

There is much that stops, short of a formal breakup of China which would offer the outside world the opportunity of constructive dialogue with the largest country in the world. It may be that the way to ensure that China does not become more dangerous as it grows richer and stronger is to ensure that in practice, if not in law, there is more than one China to deal with.

The writer is a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. The article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

Hatred shouldn't prevail

To the Editor:

AS THE world heard the news of the horrible slaughter at the Al Ibrahim Mosque, in Hebron, so did I. What a great excuse to stop the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians. To allow one crazy, overzealous Jew to stop the progress of peace in the entire region seems counter-productive to me. Not to speak of allowing hate to conquer love, once again. It seems so easy to hate and separate. Peace and love, on the other hand, seem nearly impossible. Fear and hate cause closed-minded people, like Goldstein, to commit such cold-blooded acts.

Even though Goldstein called himself "religious" his hateful actions at the mosque proved he was not Godly. God is love. When we love, we do not kill. To get the Middle East peace talks going again, we must all learn a positive lesson from this mass murder and not allow it to give us excuses to wage more war.

If anything, this latest slaughter only proves how badly peace is needed in the Middle East. We actually fear one another! What a sad state we have slipped into as a world society.

Religion has caused so much of the world's violence and hate. God did not have this negative goal in mind when the different religions were started. The whole purpose of religion is to worship God. If we use God as an excuse for hate, then we have missed the whole message of religion.

We as a world community cannot allow the evil acts of one individual to control the entire peace process. That gives his fearful, hateful thoughts domination. No good ever comes from hate, fear, separation and war. What we must do is use this terrible event to change the situation for the greater good of all Middle Eastern people. When the Middle East is at peace, the entire globe will be closer to world peace. Peace comes one step at a time. We must have patience and tolerance and always remember, "we are all created by the same God."

Linda L. May,
Iowa,
the U.S.

Faith and 'the Balkan factor' prop up new dinar

By Bernd Dehusmann
Reuter

BELGRADE — The clerk behind the counter of McDonald's restaurant in Belgrade's Terazije Square was indignant. "No, we don't take German marks," she said, waving away a proffered 10 mark note. "We have our own money."

At a nearby pharmacy, the foreign currency suffered similar rejection as it did at a news stand.

Only a few weeks ago, when the German mark still effectively functioned as Serbia's currency, 10 mark notes were in such high demand that enterprising Belgrade citizens made small fortunes by charging five per cent for breaking large denomination notes into smaller bills.

Employees would rush into the street to change the currency into marks as soon as they were paid. Inflation running at an annual rate of more than a billion per cent eroded the value of Yugoslav dinars by the minute.

Small notes were at a premium because no one wanted to change more than absolutely necessary for a purchase. Someone who wanted to buy, say, 10 marks' worth of groceries and had nothing but a 50 mark bill might find himself stuck with change in evaporating dinars.

A 500 billion dinar note issued in December and worth around eight marks at the time shrank in value to 1/600th of a pfennig within three weeks.

All that changed, at least for the time being, on Jan. 24, when the government introduced a new dinar, at par value to the German mark, as part of an economic recovery package which also provided for cuts in public spending and more efficient tax collection.

The government said its plan was backed by reserves of 500 million German marks (285 million) and gold.

Many economic experts scoffed at the plan, arguing that the new currency was too thinly backed and would fail as quickly as a string of previous re-denominations.

"I think the super-dinar works because people want to believe in it... Yes we used the German mark as an alternative currency for almost two years. But no one liked doing that. It's a matter of pride," a Belgrade housewife.

And how could there be a hard currency in an economy so badly devastated by international economic sanctions that two thirds of the work force is unemployed and industrial production has come to a virtual stop?

"I think the superdinar works because people want to believe in it," said a Belgrade housewife. "Yes, we used the German mark as an alternative currency for almost two years. But no one liked doing that. It's a matter of pride."

Businessman Miodrag Arsic phrased it differently: "Don't look for logic, remember where we are. This is the Balkan factor."

Since the government slowed down the printing presses which had run round-the-clock to churn out banknotes with more and more zeros, inflation has dropped

from 313,000,000 per cent in January to minus 0.6 per cent in February, according to the Federal Bureau of Statistics.

The government now pursues a policy of money supply so tight that banks frequently have to turn back clients trying to change hard currencies into new dinars.

The anti-inflation programme was drawn up by 75-year-old Dragosav Avramovic, who worked for the World Bank in Washington for 25 years and was called out of retirement to try to cure the rump Yugoslavia's financial misery.

Mr. Avramovic was appointed governor of the Central Bank on March 2.

In his first interview since his appointment, he touched on the psychological element in the economic recovery package.

"If... the world starts believing that this country's leadership will not play games with money i.e. with the value of the currency, that will be enough," he told the independent newsweekly Vreme.

"(But) if we don't stabilise the budget and achieve a high interest rate (on dinar accounts) in spite of sanctions, we will have to hand over the country to the Germans... They will make it stable."

One problem preventing the implementation of any recovery programme. Economic experts here say, is the absence of reliable figures in a country where the 'grey economy' has played a dominant role for the better part of two years.

"Nobody knows what (rump) Yugoslavia's social product is right now," Mr. Avramovic said. "We don't know anything for sure."

That goes for the amount of hard currency people hold outside the banking system. Estimates range from \$800 million to two billion marks.

The government has promised to pay six per cent interest on dinar savings accounts but even "the Balkan factor" has so far failed to convince Serbs that their marks are safer in the bank than in the piggy bank.

By Richard Meares
Reuter

BELFAST — If you steal a car in Britain you might end up in jail. If you steal one in Northern Ireland, you may be shot through the kneecaps and crippled for life.

Outlawed guerrilla groups, sometimes known as "paramilitaries" or "paras," that rule the roost in Belfast's Protestant and Roman Catholic ghettos and beyond have their own brand of justice which terrifies the people they claim to support.

"Kneecapping," apparently learnt from mafia practices, and banishment from the province are favoured punishments for a range of crimes or displeasing guerrilla leaders.

"It is about not adhering to their moral code, challenging their authority, drinking on the street corner or even playing loud music late at night," said Henry Robinson, a spokesman for Families Against Intimidation and Terror (FAIT).

"The paras murder, mutilate and intimidate people within their own communities to terrorise their way to power. Organised crime is a very big part of it."

FAIT was set up four years ago by Nancy Gracey, the Catholic mother of a "punishment shooting" victim.

It is the only local group publicly confronting human rights abuses committed by the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which is fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland, and its armed Protestant foes as they police their respective territories.

"Since 1972, there have been about 2,000 punishment shootings," said Mr. Robinson, himself a reformed guerrilla who took part in a kneecapping and was jailed.

Other punishments include shooting through the elbows or ankles as well as the knees, dropping concrete slabs on the limbs and breaking fingers, or death, common for alleged informants.

Some victims have to flee Northern Ireland or face death. FAIT helps arrange safe passage and campaigns for them to be allowed to return.

"I can't say if we have caused a fall in the number of incidents but we have made an enormous difference," Mr. Robinson said from FAIT's new offices in the centre of



Demonstrators face a police force in which they have little faith (File photo)

An Irish brand of justice

divided Belfast.

People now have somewhere to go for support and can break the silence against terrorism. We have chosen to go eyeball-to-eyeball with the white heat of sectarianism."

In the Oscar-nominated film "In the Name of the Father," only a father's desperate plea saves one character from being kneecapped by the IRA for stealing lead from roofs in the

early days of the Northern Ireland conflict 20 years ago.

These days, suspected child molesters, drug dealers and joyriders, bored youths who steal cars to go for a drive, are more likely targets. Mistakes are common.

"The paras take second or even third hand information from an acquaintance in the bar and treat it as fact," Mr. Robinson said.

One day, he was picked up in the street and taken down an alleyway by IRA gunmen who beat him with baseball bats, held him down, pressed a gun

to the back of each knee and fired. The pain was excruciating and the damage to the knees is permanent.

"Once you've been kneecapped you are labelled," he said. "You can't go into a pub because they are picking you out."

FAIT admits many people are happy to see the gunmen clean the streets of joyriders, drug pushers and alcoholics.

The group says its files, brimming with cases of mistaken identity or alleged vendetta attacks against people disliked by a man, a guerrilla group, should be a warning.

"You cannot isolate small sections of the community like joyriders and say they are not entitled to their human rights," said FAIT coordinator Geoff Maxwell.

The human rights watchdog Amnesty International (AI), which says the figures on punishment shootings are only the tip of an iceberg of intimidation, has been told of parents who, unable to control their unruly children, pass their names on to the IRA.

In Protestant communities, the regular police still hold sway and "justice" meted out by the gunmen often relates to alleged informants or supporters who get cold feet.

Many of Northern Ireland's Roman Catholic minority oppose British rule and distrust the police and the legal system.

"In that sort of vacuum you get pressure building up for action to be taken," said a spokesman for the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein. Paul, however, is convinced the silent masses reject summary justice.

"I don't agree the majority of people go along with it. When I was shot I got dozens of cards and messages from local people. They're scared to speak out about what's happening," he said.

FAIT denies targeting nationalists more than pro-British "loyalists".

In 1993, 60 per cent of the people FAIT dealt with were suffering from loyalist intimidation and many of them were Protestants.

Mr. Robinson, an energetic 32-year-old, said he had received death threats but would carry on. But he acknowledged guerrillas could stamp out FAIT if they decided to.

"We could be crushed or we could grow, who knows?"

Rebels, poverty and American pie in Angola

By Nicholas Shaxson
Reuter

CABINDA, Angola — They call it "little America," a bavaro for oil workers on Angola's steamy coast where they can play golf, tuck into a steak or order apple pie.

Outside the Malongo Oil Base of Chevron's Gulf Oil Company, some 30 kilometres north of Cabinda city, there are rebels and poverty. Inside it is a slice of Americana in Africa.

"It's like a little city," said Tim Conoor of Nashville, Tennessee, services manager for the base which is heavily guarded by the government and serves thousands of foreign workers manning offshore oil rigs along the Cabinda coastline.

"The meals are top quality, U.S. Americans tend to eat a lot and there is plenty of food all the time, mostly American and European dishes."

Outside Malongo, rebels of the Front for the Liberation of Cabinda Enclave (FLEC) are fighting a low-key independence war for the isolated enclave of Cabinda.

Cabinda is physically cut off from the rest of Angola by the Zaire River and a narrow swatch of Zaire, but its people feel even more isolated by cultural differences.

"I will never accept the

Angolan presence here, never in all my life," says Jorge Congo, a Roman Catholic priest.

Many of the enclave's 170,000 people look to Zaire and Congo for their kin and culture. "They want separation," said Lino Wilson, the central government's information representative in Cabinda.

The enclave is fertile ground for dissent. Despite riches flowing from under the sea, most of Cabinda's people live in poverty.

Io Cabinda's bars and dance halls people drink Zairean beer and listen to fast-paced Zairean and Congolese music but for many life differs little from when oil was found in 1966.

Flares from offshore rigs are not visible in the village of Tumba, 25 kilometres southeast of Malongo. Inhabitants plant crops and hunt. The last rains were poor, they say, and food is scarce.

A doctor at the provincial hospital said malnutrition is not a serious problem. Tropical rains are plentiful most years and many people farm, fish or hunt. But "poverty-related diseases" such as diarrhoea were rife, he said.

Some FLEC officials say UNITA, whose aim is control of all of Angola, has no place

in their enclave which has a culture more similar to neighbouring French-speaking Zaire and Congo.

In recent years the FLEC has staged isolated attacks on oil company vehicles but inflicted scant damage to installations. There are no reliable figures on casualties between rebels and government troops which go largely unreported by the state-run media.

Fernando Soma, clinical director of Cabinda's main hospital, said three or four civilians were admitted monthly with combat wounds, some from landmines. He did not know the casualty rate.

FLEC's struggle has been overshadowed by resumption in late 1992 of the civil war, waged for 16 years between the formerly Marxist Luanda government and UNITA rebels.

Army Major Waher Nunes said the ruling dated from the time when Cuban troops and Soviet advisers were in Cabinda and it was feared there would be confrontations with American oil workers.

The Cubans and Soviets have long gone but Tim Henley, Malongo's general operations manager, said Cabinda was still not considered safe.

"I know a lot of our people would like to visit the town," he said, "but... we have all the facilities we need in the camp."

And in the discussion, it became clear that there was a tremendous desire for the men and women gathered in that room to see what they as individuals could do to try to help bolster the peace process. And I made the suggestion that perhaps an American group might be formed from both communities to try to stimulate the development of an economic infrastructure in Gaza and Jericho to make it more possible for the peace process to move forward.

And so this group was formed, and it's unique in many ways. It has two presidents, if you will, Mel Levine and Jim Zogby, a major respected leader in the Jewish community and the president of the Arab-American Institute. For years, these two individuals were on opposite sides of virtually every issue related to the Middle East, and in fact they still are. But the potential for making common cause in behalf of peace was clearly evident. And so we organised this group.

And during the meetings, as the individuals here who have been a part of this group can tell you, the spirit has been very positive, and we have been making a great deal of progress. I am very, very encouraged about it.

If we push on, if we do not give up, I am confident that we can achieve the progress and the resolution that we all seek, and not just in transforming relations between Israel and the Palestinians, but between Israel and all of her Arab neighbours.



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Australia considers allowing more immigrants

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — Australia is considering raising the number of immigrants it allows to match a forecast increase in economic growth.

Immigration Minister Nick Bolkes has said that economic and social climates are right for the government to consider moderate increases in immigration programme after several years of no increases because of recession and high unemployment.

"I can't say the numbers, all I will say is that I think we're getting to a stage where we can look at moderate increases in our programme," he said.

From July 1992 to June 1993 Australia had the lowest level of immigration in a decade, with 76,330 people entering the country.

Other top countries included Hong Kong, Vietnam, the former Yugoslavia, the Philippines and China.

Russia warns Ukraine about gas payments

ESPOO, Finland (R) — Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin has warned that Russia's patience would end soon if Ukraine did not pay its debts for natural gas imports.

Mr. Chernomyrdin said he was worried about the situation.

"We hope that the Ukraine government sees it is time to pay the money back," Mr. Chernomyrdin told a news conference.

"If they cannot afford to pay then we must not sell (gas) to

Israel envoy says China embraces former 'enemy'

BEIJING (R) — Israeli Industry and Trade Minister Micha Harish said Tuesday that Sino-Israel trade will expand rapidly now that China no longer sees Israel as an enemy.

"It's really striking to see how friendly the attitude is here toward Israel and the Jewish people," he said.

Mr. Harish said capital and technology-rich but labour-poor Israel was finding an eager partner in China, eager for the hard currency income from reexports across Asia.

"It's unbelievable to see," Mr. Harish said in an interview after what he described as a rewarding series of high-level meetings with Chinese officials including Vice Premier Li Lanqing and Foreign Trade Minister Wu Yi.

"This didn't happen in 1992. Apparently there was an undercurrent, like in other Asian countries and India. The country (China) was an enemy of Israel," he said.

China and Israel established diplomatic ties in February 1992, ending decades of enmity stemming mainly from Beijing's solidarity and support for Arab countries.

Bilateral trade has grown rapidly since then.

Chinese customs figures show that China's 1993 exports to Israel rose 498 per cent from 1992 to reach \$76.39 million and its imports from Israel rose 96 per cent to \$75.93 million.

Israeli statistics show bilateral trade at \$100 million last year with a \$10 million surplus for Israel.

One project will transfer world-leading fibre-optic cable technology to a Shanghai firm.

Others included metal and plastic-coating ventures and an advanced silo system for grain storage — a crucial need in China where up to a quarter of the grain harvest is lost to water damage, vermin and poor transport.

"In about four or five years we will be in the many hundreds of millions of dollars of

them," he said.

"For the time being we are holding out. But I warn that our tolerance will end soon," Mr. Chernomyrdin added.

Russia's Gasprom Company agreed to restore gas supplies to Ukraine, at least until April 10.

The state-controlled firm declared a month-long truce with Ukraine after slashing supplies a week earlier in protest over Kiev's failure to pay a debt of 1.5 trillion rubles (\$900 million).

will be cut off completely."

Mr. Chernomyrdin said:

"We give them very much concessions. We will of course not forgive them (their debt). But we can still take it. We give them extensions (on payments.)"

"We hope that the Ukraine government sees it is time to pay the money back," he said.

Jordan records modest growth in industrial production in '93

By a Jordan Times Staff reporter

AMMAN — Overall industrial production registered only a 1.7 per cent growth during 1993 although some sectors showed significant growth rates, according to official figures.

The general industrial production index set by the government rose by 3.6 points to close at 212.7 points, while the general revised industrial production index (which includes phosphate and potash output) went up by 3.3 points to 215.6 points, according to the December 1993 statistical bulletin of the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ).

The figures compare with 16.6 points rise in the general index and 12.4 points in the revised index registered during the year 1992, the bulletin said.

A sector-by-sector review showed that the sharpest decline was registered in the pharmaceutical sector. The sector's index registered a decline of 63.4 points to close at the end of the year at 231.8 points.

Another decline was seen in the production of food items. The food items index dropped from 162.5 points to 144.8 points during the year compared with a rise of 62.7 points during the previous year. Other sectors where output dropped included animal feed, leather and footwear, phosphate, detergents and soap as well as batteries.

The general index and other indices of various sectors of industrial production (processing, mining and quarrying, chemicals and construction materials in addition to several other categories) were set at 100 based on 1979 production figures. As such, the index figures also reflect the overall rise or drop in production in various sectors since 1979.

The bulletin, giving a sector by sector index, showed that:

— Soft drinks production went up by 44.9 points to close at 173.1 points

— Alcoholic drinks production rose by 2.1 points to close at 90.3

— Fodder output declined by 18.3 points to close at 87

— Cigarettes and matches production rose by 10.7 points to close at 102.3

— Clothes and textiles production rose by 12.5 points to close at 131.4

— Footwear and leather production dropped by 3.1 points to close at 128.5

— Plastic and sponge output rose by 9.2 points to close at 141.5

— Pharmaceuticals declined by 63.4 points to close at 231.8

— Paints output rose by 14.6 points to close at 131.6

— Detergents and soap production declined by 15.9 points to close at 181.1

— The general index for construction materials remained unchanged at 223.9 points

— Iron production declined by 41.5 points to close at 153.8

— Cement production (including clinker) shot up by 59 points to close at 546

— Wood products output went up 1.5 points to close at 57.1

— Other construction materials output went up by 8.8 points to close at 228

— Petroleum products output went up by 1.5 points to close at 170.5

— Phosphate output dropped by 2.7 points to close at 149.7

— Paper and cardboard production rose by 53.1 points to close at 302.4

— Batteries output dropped 11.4 points to close at 101.8

— Electricity production rose by 45.5 points to close at 524.4

The CBJ bulletin gave the following figures for output in various sectors during the year 1993 (the bulletin used the old British/American system to give the figures and the Jordan Times converted into the metric system. The figures in brackets give the corresponding figures for 1992):

— Phosphates 3.79 million tonnes (3.86 million tonnes)

— Potash 1.35 million tonnes (1.13 million tonnes)

— Fodder 39,330 tonnes (48,510 tonnes)

— Alcoholic drinks 6.57 million litres (6.25 million litres)

— Cigarettes 3.46 million (3.09 million)

— Textiles 1,037 million metres (1,001 million metres)

— Upper leather 233,200 square metres

— Sole leather and wool 53,370 tonnes (44,100 tonnes)

— Fertilizers 42,290 tonnes (49,824 tonnes)

— Chemical acids 763,920 tonnes (999,000 tonnes)

— Detergents 29,160 tonnes (30,870 tonnes)

— Cement (including clinker) 2.76 million tonnes (2,466 million tonnes)

— Iron 163,260 tonnes (211,230 tonnes)

— Metallic pipes 15,210 tonnes (13,230 tonnes)

— Petroleum products 2.52 million tonnes (2.54 million tonnes)

— Paper and cardboard 14,400 tonnes (15,300 tonnes)

— Liquid batteries 77,400 (86,700)

— Electricity 4.43 billion kilowatts (4.06 billion kilowatts)

Iran budget, tailored to low oil prices, gets final approval

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's budget for the year starting March 21, including \$2.3 billion for defence and law-enforcement, received final approval Tuesday.

Parliamentary speaker Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, anticipating the approval of the \$6.8 trillion rial (\$39.9 billion) budget by the Guardian Council, told a news conference that liberal economic reforms should be slowed down to ease pressure on the poor.

The council, which vets laws for conformity with Islam and the constitution, ratified the budget after parliament dropped a reference to interest and made other minor changes in the bill.

"The main message of this budget is economising," Mr. Nateq-Nouri said.

Parliament approved the budget last week after a debate dominated by concern about low oil prices and Iran's mounting foreign debt.

It had cut the government's projected revenue by 10 per cent. Mr. Nateq-Nouri said it reduced expenditures in various sectors by between seven and 13 per cent according to their priority. The budget is nominally balanced.

"We do not accept fast-paced reforms at the expense of losing the vulnerable strata," he replied when asked if the MPs' rejection of fuel price rises amounted to slowing down President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's free-market reform plan.

"I believe we should carry out these reforms, but first we must create the social safety net, otherwise the vulnerable strata cannot bear the pressure," Mr. Nateq-Nouri said.

He said the budget earmarked four trillion rials (\$2.3 billion) for defence and law enforcement.

Mohammad Majdara, member of the parliament's plan and budget committee, told Reuters the allocation covered the army, revolutionary guards and police. He did not say how much would be spent on buying weapons from abroad.

"The four trillion rials fi-

gure is 7.5 per cent more than the current year's. But considering 20 per cent inflation, the defence and law-enforcement budget has actually declined by 12.3 per cent," he said.

Some Western and Arab Gulf states have voiced concern about Iran's recent arms purchases, including two Russian submarines. Iran rejects charges of militarism, saying its military spending is a fraction of that of its Arab neighbours like Saudi Arabia.

About 60 per cent of the overall budget is that of state banks and companies. The rest — \$2.3 trillion rials (\$18.5 billion) — is the government's budget.

In the budget debate which started in January, deputies cut the government's oil revenue projection to \$10.15 billion — some \$2 billion to \$3 billion below the current year's estimate.

But the overall budget figure is still 28 per cent above the current year's approved level and likely to fuel inflation.

Mr. Nateq-Nouri estimated Iran's overdue commercial debts would amount to between \$6 billion and \$7 billion on March 20, after refinancing deals worth a total \$4.3 billion agreed with German banks and Japanese trading companies since last month.

Article 29 of the budget authorizes the use of \$6 billion in foreign credits, mainly to build dams and oil and gas projects.

One of the points the Guardian Council had objected to was a clause in article 29 which said the government should pay the "average international interest rate" on such credits.

Iran's 1983 no-interest banking law outlaws payment by Iranian banks of interest, a form of usury banned under Islam. But interest is inevitably involved in Iran's foreign dealings.

In a session late Monday, deputies argued that the offending clause was intended to prevent the government from using high-interest foreign credit.

"The four trillion rials fi-

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Mandela receives tumultuous welcome in Bophuthatswana

MIMABATHO. South Africa (Agencies) — ANC President Nelson Mandela received a tumultuous welcome in Bophuthatswana Tuesday after South Africa's weekend overthrow of homeland leader Lucas Mangope.

Pretoria took over the nominally independent homeland after Mr. Mangope, a bitter foe of the African National Congress (ANC), refused to guarantee free campaigning for South Africa's first democratic elections in late April.

Residents lining the streets to welcome Mr. Mandela said they were overjoyed to see him and he was represe

nated freedom to them.

His cavalcade drove from the main air base on Mimabatho's outskirts, occupied for a day last Friday by armed white rightwingers from South Africa, to the South Africa embassy which now effectively controls the homeland.

The white rightists failed in their bid to keep Mr. Mangope in power and dispersed when South African troops arrived.

Ambassador Tjaart Van Der Walt and Job Mokgoro, a black official from the Development Bank of Southern Africa, were appointed administrators and are expected to establish a council to regulate the homeland until the April 26-28 elections.

Mr. Mandela, who is widely expected to emerge from the poll as South Africa's first black president, addressed thousands of enthusiastic civil

servants at the Mimabatho Convention Centre.

He promised that their jobs, pay and pensions were secure.

Unrest first broke out among Bophuthatswana's two million people when civil servants demonstrated to demand their pensions be paid before the election because of fears over the homeland's future.

The 10 black homelands created by Pretoria during the apartheid era are due to disappear after the elections, which Mr. Mangope had originally vowed to boycott.

"We want to normalise the situation here. Although we fought the homeland system for many years, the civil service is going to be necessary when we have a democratic government," Mr. Mandela said.

Meanwhile, gunmen killed six people and wounded seven near Empangeni on South Africa's Natal north coast Tuesday, police said.

Policeman Major Bal Naidoo said the gunman opened fire on people in Eselelo township at about 4 a.m. (0200 GMT). He had no other details and would not comment on a motive.

At least two people were reported killed Tuesday in the tense black township of Umlazi; as ANC supporters protested the occupation of a site where they were to have rallied earlier in the week.

Mr. Mandela also urged students at the convention centre to return to their schools to work for a better tomorrow.

Other ANC leaders arrived in Mimabatho Tuesday, including ANC women's league President Winnie Mandela, estranged wife of the ANC president. They travelled to

Mimabatho in separate vehicles, witnesses said.

At the meeting with business owners, many of whom had their shops looted and burned last week, Mr. Mandela said he regretted the damage but appealed for perseverance.

"We urge you to rebuild your buildings because our country can never grow without the development of business," he said.

Mr. Mangope and his supporters have blamed the ANC for the destruction, saying it instigated the uprising. When an audience member asked if there would be government assistance for victims of the looting, ANC foreign affairs director Thabo Mbeki would only say the subject was under discussion.

"All of you have experience of running a government and we rely on you," he said.

Mr. Mandela warned them a new government might have to rationalise or trim the civil service. But he added: "None of you are going to throw into the streets. You will be placed in other jobs. It does not matter whether you are black or white."

Mr. Mandela also urged students at the convention centre to return to their schools to work for a better tomorrow.

The ANC was forced to hold its campaign rally in the streets Sunday after the rival Inkatha Freedom Party, which opposes

the April election, took over the Umlazi Stadium set aside for the ANC gathering.

Early Tuesday, hundreds of ANC supporters began marching through Umlazi to present a memorandum to police accusing them of inaction Sunday. The memorandum also demanded the removal from the township of the South African police's Internal Stability Unit, which the ANC accuses of instigating violence.

A local resident, Mildred Miya, said she was walking with another woman when two carloads of armed men drove by and shot at them. Her companion was shot in the head and killed, said Miya. She alleged the killers were in uniforms of the Kwazulu Police Force.

Kwazulu is the Zulu tribal homeland, which is Inkatha's stronghold. It has its own police force and has been accused by the ANC of atrocities against political opponents.

A local peace monitor on hand to observe the day's events said a dead body was also found in a shack Tuesday on the edge of the township. The monitor, Stephan Miller, said the body was in an ANC-dominated area of the township.

Umlazi, outside Durban, is in Natal province, the area hardest-hit by political violence between the IFP and ANC. Violence has soared in recent weeks because of Inkatha's resistance to the April 26-28 election.



African National Congress President Nelson Mandela laughs as he is given a rapturous welcome by the crowd at a rally in Sebokeng near Johannesburg during his election campaign in the Transvaal (AFP photo)

Bosnia Serbs refuse convoy to Maglaj

SARAJEVO (R). Bosnian Serb authorities refused Tuesday to grant permission for an urgently needed relief convoy to enter the besieged Muslim enclave of Maglaj, United Nations relief officials said.

The convoy had been planned to leave from Zenica in central Bosnia Wednesday morning for the short drive north into the city of Maglaj, where at least 16,000 people have been under siege by Serb and Croat forces since the middle of 1993.

A total of 103,000 people, most of them Muslims, are trapped in the Maglaj pocket, which has relied for months on night airdrops of food. The last U.N. convoy to reach the enclave gained entry on Oct. 25.

The United Nations has been denied access to the area repeatedly by Serbs in recent months.

U.N. relief officials said the latest refusal came from Bosnian Serb officials in their self-styled capital of Pale, not from field commanders who have been blamed for most of the delays in the past.

The U.N. Security Council

Monday condemned Bosnian Serb intransigence and called for an immediate lifting of the siege and access for all humanitarian convoys.

The United States and Russia will employ a mix of inducements and threats to push the

Bosnian Serbs into joining a budding Croat-Muslim Federation in Bosnia or ceding to it conquered land, diplomat say.

Incentives to board the superpower peace train in the Balkans, they say, would include the right to keep some territory taken in battle and revocation of U.N. sanctions imposed for aggression against Bosnia.

If the Serbs cling to the 70 per cent of Bosnia they hold and keep waging war to grab more, a U.N. arms embargo could be partially lifted to exempt the Croats and Muslims.

Western diplomats sketched the next stage in Bosnia's peace process following a U.S.-brokered Croat-Muslim federation to set up a decentralised cantonal state with a joint army, ending a bloody scramble for ethnically mixed territory.

Russian peace envoy Vitaly Churkin began shuttle diplomacy this week to usher the Serbs, linked to Russia by Slav heritage and Orthodox religion, into the U.S.-sponsored peace plan to forge a durable overall settlement.

After meeting Serbian and Croatian leaders in Belgrade and Zagreb Monday, Mr. Churkin said the federation could be a "stepping stone" to a full peace settlement but that Serb interests had to be recognised.

"You say to the Serbs, you already have 70 per cent, in return for recognition of some of your gains you need to give the Muslims and Croats some good quality territory."

"If the Serbs do not play ball, they run into the possibility of renewed efforts to lift the arms embargo."

The world would also ensure that ethnically cleansed territory would be placed in indefinite quarantine.

"We'd devise a way of 'poisoning' property acquired by ethnic cleansing," a diplomat said.

4 die in shooting spree at U.S. firm

SANTA FE SPRINGS, Calif. (R). A man who had been fired from his job at an electronics plant returned Monday and went on a shooting rampage, killing three former co-workers and wounding two before taking his own life.

Scores of panic-stricken employees of Extron Electronics Inc. dropped to the floor or ran screaming from the building as the gunman yelled "get down" in Vietnamese and opened fire, witnesses said.

The suspect, identified as Tuan Nguyen, 29, walked from one corner of the building to the other, calmly selecting his victims and shooting them at point-blank range with a .38-

calibre pistol, police said.

A man and a woman died inside the computer parts plant in the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Fe Springs, and a second man who was shot in the chest succumbed to his injuries at a local hospital.

Mr. Nguyen and all of his victims were of Asian descent, and though he had worked with some of them, it was unclear if he targeted them in advance, authorities said.

Mr. Nguyen had worked at Extron for 10 weeks but was fired 2½ weeks ago for poor performance during his probationary period, said Bill Martin, a spokesman for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

In an interview conducted when he left the company, Mr. Nguyen made no threats, and the motive for his attack was not known, Mr. Martin said. Mr. Nguyen was believed to be Vietnamese but authorities were unable to confirm his nationality.

Mr. Nguyen managed to bypass the company's elaborate security system Monday by entering through a rear door that had been left open for ventilation as temperatures soared into the upper 80s.

About 120 employees — many of them South East Asian immigrants — were in the building at the time of the shootings, and many fled through the exists, police said.

Clinton seeks normalcy but troubles stalk him

BOSTON (Agencies). It was supposed to be the day the Clinton White House got back on track, but it was interrupted by something like a train wreck as the administration was hit by the resignation of another top official under a cloud.

President Bill Clinton's Monday began in Detroit with the president speaking about a favourite subject: The reviving U.S. economy.

By late afternoon a saddened president was in Boston trying to explain his latest personnel problem and minimise the damage to his administration.

An old friend of Mr. Clinton's from Arkansas, Associate Attorney General Webster Hubbell, unexpectedly resigned. The resignation came amid questions about billing practices at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, Arkansas, where he was an associate of first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton.

It was another setback to an administration already staggering from the Whitewater affair and trying to refocus attention on policy. "As I said, I have no knowledge of this," Mr. Clinton told reporters in Boston who asked about possible harm to his administration. "This is, to me, more of a personal deal for Webb Hubbell."

But White House officials were clearly crestfallen that the week during which they hoped to get attention back on domestic issues had started so

badly.

The president launched a three-day trip Sunday that was supposed to concentrate on the economy, including a speech at the International Jobs Conference in Detroit, and to get away from Washington and two weeks of unseeable Whitewater headlines.

"Whitewater" takes its name from the Whitewater Development Corp., a now defunct Arkansas real estate venture in which then-Arkansas Governor Clinton and his wife invested.

A special counsel is investigating Whitewater's ties to the failed Madison Guaranty Savings and Loan in the 1980s.

The scandal exploded in Washington this month with word that 10 administration officials had been subpoenaed to testify about several meetings between White House and Treasury Department staff concerning a federal probe into the Whitewater affair.

The Republicans cried "coverup" and on March 5, White House Counsel Bernard Nussbaum was forced to resign after admitting he took part in the meetings on the investigation with treasury aides.

But when Mr. Hubbell's resignation burst into the headlines in the afternoon, it bumped Mr. Clinton's remarks about global growth and jobs right out of the spotlight.

Television newscasts Monday evening focused on the president's problems again, including rehashes of the United States of America.

Meanwhile Hillary Rodham Clinton reiterated Monday that she made mistakes in handling the Whitewater affair, but "you live and learn and you go on."

"When this is all over, it's going to be the same story we've been telling for two years: We made a bad investment, we lost money and there's really not much more to add to it," Mrs. Clinton told reporters in a brief news conference outside a Colorado National Guard field hospital.

The first lady said she was "deeply saddened" by the resignation Monday of Mr. Hubbell.

The Clintons said they lost \$69,000 on their investment into Whitewater.

"We know we lost money. We lost a bunch of money for us," she said. "Goodness knows what you all would be saying if we made any money. I'm glad we did lose money."

"We're just going to do whatever is appropriate to do. That's what we've always done over the last 15 years or so we have dealt with this," she said. And to quench a thirst hardened on the pistol range — the club sells small arms — there is a karaoke lounge and bar.

Membership is restricted to 200 people, including 65 Cambodians. It comes in three categories: Honourary, VIP and regular, and starts at \$5,000. Joining requires invitation or introduction by members, and applications are thoroughly examined by the board of directors and honourary membership committee.

The brochure states,

Japan police quiz beautician on dismembered body

TOKYO (R). Japanese police are questioning a female beauty salon manager in connection with the grisly murder of a hairdresser whose torso and severed limbs have been found in southern Japan, news reports said Tuesday. The crime came to light in early March with the discovery of a woman's left arm in a plastic rubbish bag at a motorway service area. The arm was identified as belonging to Mayumi Iwasaki, a 31-year-old hairdresser from Fukukawa, who was last seen on Feb. 28 at a farewell party being given for her by salon colleagues. Later, the torso, with breasts and internal organs horribly mutilated, was found in two pieces in a railway station locker. But the head and some other body parts have yet to surface. Television news showed the suspect

— her head and most of her body covered by a coat — being bundled into a car and driven to police headquarters for questioning. A police spokesman refused to comment on reports that detectives

were poised to formally arrest the 38-year-old woman, and that they planned to question her male friend. The reports said police suspected the crime might have been work-related. Iwasaki, apparently a popular and valued hairdresser, was moving to a new salon taking most of her clients with her.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

German groups campaign to stop match

BERLIN (R) — A loose alliance of left-wing German groups, worried that neo-Nazis might use a soccer match between England and Germany on Hitler's birthday next month for fascist demonstrations, are campaigning to change the date and venue. The match is set for April 20 — the 105th anniversary of Hitler's birth — in Berlin's Olympic Stadium, site of the 1936 Olympics which Hitler used to showcase his theories of Aryan racial superiority. "We're strongly opposed to this game on this date in this stadium," said Thomas Nord, deputy chairman of the reformed Communist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) in Berlin Tuesday. "The Olympic stadium has fascist traditions and is the worst possible place for this match." Nord said left-wing groups — including the PDS, Union Workers Against Racism, Anti-Fascist Soccer Fans and the Humanist Union — were planning a demonstration in front of Berlin's city hall April 9. He said the groups would press organisers to change the date and venue. But he said there would be no demonstrations at the stadium nor any attempts to disrupt the match if their protests prove unsuccessful. The controversial soccer friendly was originally scheduled for Hamburg.

Paris wants to reclaim Grand Prix

PARIS (R) — A new athletics stadium opening in Paris later this year could stage annual Grand Prix meetings in the French capital from 1995, city officials said Tuesday. The 20,000-capacity Charlety Stadium will host this season's Grand Prix finals Sept. 3. Joel Laine, sports director to Paris Mayor Jacques Chirac, said the city also expected to reclaim the annual international athletics meeting it lost to Lille six years ago. "This meeting should be repatriated to Paris from July 1995," he said. The event, now upgrades to Grand Prix circuit status, has been staged at the Stadium Nord in Villeneuve D'Asco near Lille since 1988. Laine said the Lille region would undoubtedly resist any move to wrest the event back to Paris. "It's true they have invested heavily in it but we can't leave Paris without a major competition. Even if we don't get it, we'll create a new event," he added.

Romanians threaten to ban Astafei

BUCHAREST (R) — Romanian athletics bosses said Tuesday they will ban high jumper Alina Astafei from competition for refusing to appear for Romania in last weekend's European indoor championships in Paris. "Alina Astafei missed a prestigious indoor competition and, worst of all, she has no credible reason for being absent," Traian Badea, secretary of the Romanian Track and Field Federation (RTFF), said. "Romania lost a probable gold medal ... because of Alina's absence. Astafei, the Barcelona Olympic silver medallist, has moved to Germany and says she wants to get German citizenship. 'We have no right to stop Alina choosing the citizenship she wants,' Badea said. "But we have done the possibility to ban her from all official contests and we'll do it." Under International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF) rules, Astafei faces a ban of between one and three years.

Melbourne to host Grand Prix in 1996

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP) — The Australian Formula One Grand Prix auto race will switch from Adelaide to Melbourne in 1996, the South Australian State government announced Tuesday. State Premier Dean Brown said the South Australian and Victorian State governments and the Formula One Constructors Association had reached an agreement to allow the race to be run in Adelaide, about 805 kilometres west of Sydney, this year, and in 1995, then move to Melbourne in 1996. As part of the deal, the Melbourne race organisers will buy equipment from Adelaide, including stands, fencing and barriers, and will help from Adelaide, including stands, fencing and barriers, and will help promote the two remaining races in Adelaide. The race originally was scheduled to switch from Adelaide to Melbourne, about 320 kilometres to the southeast, in 1997.

Luton holds West Ham to goalless tie

LONDON (AP) — Division one Luton held West Ham to a goalless tie Monday in a Football Association Cup quarterfinal game, leaving Chelsea waiting to know who it will meet in a semifinal at Wembley. Some 27,000 fans at Upton Park saw West Ham's Mike Marsh hit the Luton post three minutes before half time and clear a header from the visitor's Des Linton off his own line in the 62nd. West Ham defender Alvin Martin almost sliced an attempted clearance into his own net and David Prece and Scott Oakes both went close to grabbing a late winner for the visitor. The two teams will meet again at Luton's Kenilworth Road Stadium March 23. The winner meets Chelsea at Wembley April 9 with Manchester United facing Oldham in the second semifinal in the same stadium a day later. The final is at Wembley May 14.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH
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DON'T MISS YOUR FREE SHOT

Neither vulnerable. South deals. and the jump to game was automatic.

West led the queen of clubs and, since that virtually marked East with the ace, it was ducked all round. Since there was no way to avoid losing a heart trick, which would complete the defenders' book, declarer could not afford any other losers. Therefore, a finesse for the king of diamonds had to succeed.

Declarer's two entries may be used to take diamond finesses, so there's no way that South can take advantage of a 3-3 heart split to set up a long heart. It might seem that the only hope is a 3-3 diamond break.

Be careful not to overlook one other chance. If diamonds are 4-2 and the hand that's short in diamonds has only two trumps, the contract is still home.

With careful timing, declarer can test both lines. After ruffing the club continuation, declarer crosses to the table with a high trump and takes a diamond finesse. Dummy's other high trump serves as an entry for a second finesse. Before drawing the last trump, declarer cashes the ace of diamonds. If the cards are as above, West shows out, but can't ruff, so declarer can trump the low diamond and claim the contract.

Even though North's hand is perfectly balanced, we endorse the raise to two spades. K Q x in opener's major is too good support to suppress, so if you don't raise immediately, opener will never play you for that much. Once spades were raised, South's hand revalued to 19 points.

Diego Maradona begins training for World Cup

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — Troubled Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona began training for the World Cup Monday after meeting with national team coach Alfonso Newell.

"I felt very good, taking into account that it's been a while since I've done anything," Maradona told a local radio station after running 45 minutes with teammate Oscar Ruggeri at the national team's training site. "At the end, as is logical, I was tired."

Maradona was one of 19 players named Sunday by Basile for a March 23 friendly match between Brazil and Argentina in Recife, Brazil.

"I won't be in good shape, but I could join the bench and play some minutes," Maradona said on a television show Sunday night.

Maradona and Basile met before the player's training session to "clear up everything we had to clear up," Maradona said. He did not elaborate.

Maradona, 33, had not played

or practised since he left the Argentine league team Newell's Old Boys six weeks ago, citing nagging leg injuries. He last played for the national team against Australia in November.

On Feb. 2, the day after he and Newell announced their separation, Maradona shot at journalists outside his home with a compressed-air rifle. Five of them were slightly injured by the pellets. A criminal court judge is expected to question Maradona about the incident.

Five days later, after trying to escape the media, Maradona scuffled with a journalist in a restaurant in Oriente, 280 miles (450 kilometres) south of Buenos Aires.

Since then, he has remained out of the public eye, and until Monday had made little effort to get into playing condition. Several times in recent years the 5-foot-5 (1.65-metre) midfielder has ballooned and then lost weight through intense training and crash diets.

Nuggets trounce Spurs

DENVER (R) — The Denver Nuggets held most valuable player candidate David Robinson to a season-low eight points and coasted to an astonishing 116-88 victory over the San Antonio Spurs late Monday.

Denver snapped a three-game losing streak with their first win over San Antonio in five tries this season. The 28-point margin of defeat was the Spurs' largest of the season.

Mahmoud Abdul Rauf scored 19 of his season-high 33 points in the first half as Denver raced to a 16-point halftime lead.

Lphonso Ellis added 17 points for the Nuggets, who increased their lead to 23 points after three quarters.

Vinny Del Negro scored 16 points to pace San Antonio, which fell into a first-place tie with the idle Houston Rockets in the Midwest Division.

But Robinson, second in the league in scoring with a 29 points per game average, shot just 3-of-12 from the floor for his meagre eight-point performance.

The Nuggets were 7-for-12 from three-point range and committed just seven turnovers.

In Utah, John Stockton sank two free throws with 20 seconds remaining to lift the Jazz to a 102-101 triumph over the Los Angeles Lakers.

Nick Van Exel missed a 20-footer from the top of the key that would have won the game for the Lakers as time expired.

Karl Malone scored 17

points and Stockton added 16

points and 12 assists for the streaking Jazz, who won for the 11th time in their last 12 games.

Van Exel scored 22 and

Vlade Divac added 19 points

and 13 rebounds to pace the Lakers.

A pair of free throws by Sedale Threatt had given the Lakers a 101-100 edge with 29 seconds left, but Stokton was hammered attempting a layup and went to the line for his game-winning free throws.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Policeman killed in southern Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Two suspected Muslim extremists shot and killed a policeman Tuesday at a village near the southern city of Assiut, police said. The killing follows the pattern of attacks by Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah, which has waged a two-year campaign of violence to destabilise the government. A policeman was also killed Sunday near Assiut. In Tuesday's shooting, the unidentified attackers gunned down policeman Mohammad Fathi, 48, and escaped with his pistol. The killing was in the village of Walidah, about 320 kilometres south of Cairo. It is one of the extremists' strongholds, and 119 people were arrested there last month.

Egyptian theologian answers critics

CAIRO (R) — The head of Egypt's top institute of Muslim learning, responding to complaints of censorship by theologians, said his institute had a duty to protect intellectual life from deviant opinions. Gad Al Haq Ali Gad Al Haqq, sheikh of Al Azhar, said in an interview published on Tuesday the row over Al Azhar's censorship role was the artificial creation of writers who wanted to "insult" Islam. In a little-publicised ruling last month, a branch of the council of state, the equivalent of a supreme court, said Al Azhar had the sole right to decide on the Islamic content of films and television programmes. Intellectuals have criticised the ruling, saying it gives Al Azhar too much power. They also object to Al Azhar's well-established role in censoring books. But Sheikh Al Haq told the international Arabic newspaper Sharq Al Awsat: "Al Azhar does not confiscate anyone's thought and does not represent an obstacle to opinion... When Al Azhar points out that certain books are deviant... it is preserving intellectual life and protecting correct thought and right opinion. In the same way as we immunise man from diseases, we must immunise our intellectual and cultural life from perverted thoughts and deviant opinions which lead people astray and give Muslims doubts about their faith and the religious law."

'Russian gas blast deliberate'

MOSCOW (R) — A gas explosion that killed 11 people in Russia's central region of Bashkortostan on Saturday was set off deliberately, ITAR-TASS news agency quoted local police as saying on Tuesday. They gave no further details. The state emergency committee in Moscow was unable to confirm the report immediately. TASS also quoted police as saying three children were among those killed in the blast, which ripped through a two-storey block of flats in Glagovshchensk, about 20 kilometres north of the regional capital UFA. Ten people were injured.

Mexican financier missing

MEXICO CITY (R) — A leading Mexican financier and one of the country's richest men has gone missing and rumours have been circulating in financial circles that he has been kidnapped, his company said. Mexican financial group Banamex-Accival, in a brief statement, said the whereabouts of company President Alfredo Harp Huerta were unknown. But the company, responding to rumours that Mr. Harp may have been kidnapped Monday in Mexico City, released a statement saying it had no confirmation that he had been kidnapped.

Belarus adopts new constitution

MINSK (API) — Lawmakers approved Belarus' first post-Soviet constitution Tuesday and called elections for president and parliament later this year. The constitution seeks to shed the legacy of decades of Soviet rule, declaring that Belarus is "a free, ... democratic state," and guaranteeing individuals the right to own land. It also states the goal of becoming a non-nuclear, neutral country. Belarus, located on Russia's western border, is one of four former Soviet republics to inherit nuclear weapons after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Nigerian found near Syria-Lebanon border

BEIRUT (AP) — A 24-year-old Nigerian was found dead Tuesday near the Lebanon-Syrian border in what is suspected to be a homicide, authorities said. Police said the man, identified as Omar Ulmaraji of Lagos, was found in the early morning in the eastern Lebanese village of Meshrefeh near the border. A coroner said the man had been dead for two days. The cause of death was a blow to the back of the head. A Nigerian passport on the victim showed he entered Syria through Damascus airport March 8, police said. Thousands of illegal labourers from Africa live the Lebanon-Syrian border to seek work.

U.S. Navy rescues six fishermen

BAHRAYN (AP) — A U.S. destroyer Tuesday rescued six Kuwaiti fishermen whose boat had been left drifting in the Gulf because of engine trouble. A Navy statement said the USS Harry W. Hill picked up a distress signal and sent out a helicopter that spotted the disabled boat at dawn 50 kilometres off Kuwait. The fishermen suffered from dehydration and one, aged 40, was in serious condition. He was flown by helicopter to Kuwait. The Harry W. Hill's home port is San Diego.

Nigerian students face execution

LAGOS (R) — Twenty-four students of the University of Lagos, closed indefinitely at the weekend following cult clashes, have been charged with treason, court officials said on Tuesday. The students, who face the death penalty if convicted, included officials of the students union, which has been spearheading a purge against secret cults accused of terrorising the campus community. The students, who pleaded not guilty, were arrested on Saturday while ransacking the homes of parents whose children they alleged were cult members. They were charged on Monday with robbing two men of property worth 900,000 naira (\$40,000) while armed with machetes and other dangerous weapons, the court officials said.

Zhirinovsky gives Nixon letter for Clinton

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky met privately with Richard Nixon on Tuesday and gave him a message to deliver to U.S. President Bill Clinton, the ITAR-TASS news agency reported. Details of the message were not disclosed. Mr. Zhirinovsky, the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party, and Mr. Nixon discussed U.S.-Russia relations and various political problems during their meeting in Mr. Nixon's hotel suite, the news agency said. The former U.S. president was to meet later with Nikolai Travkin, head of the Democratic Party of Russia, before heading for Ukraine on Wednesday and a meeting with President Leonid Kravchuk.

21% of Russian MPs want Alaska back

MOSCOW (R) — One Russian parliamentary deputy in five believes Alaska should be part of Russia, not the United States, according to an opinion poll published Tuesday. The Ninetive Poll Service said it had surveyed almost half the 444 members of the State Duma, the lower house of the Russian parliament, in January. The poll found that 21 per cent said Alaska should be part of Russia, though 51 per cent said it should stay part of the United States. The rest refused to answer or said they could not reply. Russia's parliament, elected last December, is dominated by conservatives. Communists and extreme nationalists, Russia sold Alaska to the United States for \$7.2 million in 1867 — a bargain price for the oil-rich northern territory which became the 49th state of the Union on Jan. 3, 1959.

Algerian media say 150 attackers overran prison

ALGIERS (Agencies) — The assault which freed more than 900 inmates from a high-security prison was mounted by more than 150 well-prepared attackers transported in 40 trucks, Algerian newspapers reported Tuesday.

The reports, including one in the state-run daily Al Mujahid, provided the first detailed accounts of the spectacular attack Thursday by Muslim fundamentalist commandos on the Tazult prison, 400 kilometres southeast of Algiers.

Al Mujahid said the attackers invaded the prison only after taking control of the nearby village to prevent guards living there from getting back to their posts. A heavy construction vehicle was placed across the road linking the prison to the town, the newspaper said.

Liberate, an independent daily, said 909 inmates escaped, including 70 who had been sentenced to death. Al Mujahid added that the raid was carried out with "the complicity of a penitentiary official who opened the gates to allow the armed groups to enter."

"To cover their flight, the assailants tore up the road linking Lambese to Batna over a stretch of 15 kilometres and strewed it with nails," Liberte said.

A manhunt was underway throughout the mountainous eastern region of Aures for the escapees and the attackers. Security forces announced Monday that they had killed 24 escapees, captured 79 and seized a large quantity of arms.

One guard and five attackers were killed in the attack, the Justice Ministry reported over the weekend. Four guards were wounded and seven kidnapped.

"A few hours before the escape Tazult villagers noticed feverish activity. A number of

young men thought to be people from Batna shopping before the end of the Ramadan fast," Al Mujahid said.

"Nobody thought the covered trucks contained armed men waiting for the end of the fast to start the operation," the paper said.

"This operation is the worst humiliation experienced by the authorities, whose absence in the security sector in recent weeks reduces what little credit they enjoyed," commented the Al Wata.

A commission of inquiry has been set up "to shed light on the conditions of the escape from the Tazult prison and establish responsibilities," APS said.

Liberate newspaper said "combined security forces were deployed immediately and continue to search the Aures region." The radio said security forces had surrounded the whole Aures region.

The radio spoke of four warlords collaborating with the gunmen but made no mention of any being killed.

The jail, one of Algeria's toughest, was built by the French in the 19th century to take prisoners condemned to death.

It is one of several where hundreds of militants have been held since political violence broke out in Algeria two years ago.

Algerian newspapers said the gunmen ringed the jail, took control and then took away the prisoners in trucks. The prison, they said, had 3,000 inmates. Some common criminals were returned after the breakout, they added.



A man digs among the debris and oil from a burning tanker which collided with a cargo ship in the Bosphorus Straits on Monday (AFP photo)

Bosphorus to stay shut until tanker fire is out

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey

said on Tuesday that the Bosphorus Strait, one of the world's busiest shipping channels, would remain shut until an oil tanker fire that killed at least 15 people had been totally extinguished.

The accident was the worst in the Bosphorus since a 1979 collision where an oil tanker exploded, killing 43 seamen.

The Nassa had been bound for Genoa after loading 98,500 tonnes of crude oil at the Russian terminal of Novorossiisk.

Mr. Akcali said a 12-member team sent by the Dutch firm Smit Bak BV had arrived in Istanbul to help put out the fire.

An official from the private maritime firm Zihni Denizlik, agent for the tanker, told Reuters by telephone.

Ibrahim Tez, state minister for maritime affairs, said earlier it could take up to 10 days to extinguish the fire.

"It is the best equipped vessel in the world and will initially remain at stand-by. If need be, it will also be used to extinguish the fire and to tow the tanker, the official, who asked not to be identified, told Reuters.

He said a greater hazard from fire was averted thanks to an inert gas system in the tankers that prevented oxygen in the tanks from flaring up and to a southwestern wind, still blowing over the strait.

"The strait cannot be opened until the fire is completely extinguished," he said.

Private television channel ATV said the oil slick from the Nassa was spreading south towards Istanbul, another private channel, HBB TV, quoted officials as saying that the fire was partly under control.

New York City's TB cases drop

NEW YORK (AP) — New

cases of tuberculosis (TB)

dropped 15 per cent in New

York City last year, the first

decline in a decade for the

nation's most-infected city.

Health officials warned Mon-

day that the decline did not

mean the city's epidemic had

been reversed, and promised

to expand programmes to fight

the highly contagious disease.

"It's not the end of the battle

but, in many ways only the

beginning. We recognise that

this may just be a blip on the

radar screen," said City Health Commissioner Margaret Hamburg. Tuberculosis, a lung disease transmitted by airborne bacteria, was once thought to be under control. But it re-

surgent sharply about 15 years

ago and has reached epidemic

levels in New York City, espe-

cially among some immigrant

and low-income groups.

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